# Akuyaku Reijo ni Koi wo Shite - WN Chapter 01-19

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# Suddenly committing murder is too heavy!

Okay, this header is about HnO, I actually just tried to continue translating the chapter 8, however I have stumbled upon many obstacles in which I couldn't make sense at all. I could opt to ask for help but I was thinking that maybe it would be better to give it to someone who can deliver it better.

That's why I'm in dilemma on whether to drop it or not.

Anyway, new series, enjoy

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**Akuyaku Reijo Ni Koi Wo Shite *Chapter 01 : Suddenly committing murder is too heavy!***

When I woke up, there were numerous stars flickering in the night sky in front of my eyes.

It was my first time seeing a night sky this beautiful ever since I was born – that impression vanished in just a moment.

Heavy stench the source of which I had no idea was drifting afloat in my surroundings.

Though I was able to move away by bearing with it, what struck me next was the pain, that ran through my whole body. I groaned while tumbling on the ground but by doing so, the situation has just worsened.

Gritting my teeth, I put up with the pain.

Though it didn't completely diminish, the pain has calmed a little bit. Regaining my composure and checking the state of my body, it seemed the pain didn't come from wounds but rather from something like bruises.

How did things end up this way–?

Though being drunk and picking up fights had come to mind, I had no memory of drinking any sake at all. The only thing I clearly remembered was going straight home and riding the bus from the nearest station. And– 「Oy. Until when

do you plan to ignore me?」

Suddenly hearing that voice, my line of thought got cut off.

Thinking about who it was I inclined my head towards where the voice came from. In that moment I forgot about the pain.

The voice came from a Caucasian boy with a slightly flushed face, blonde hair and green eyes. Though it might have sounded like the person was a bishounen*, the boy was plump or rather carrying enough weight to become chubby. As he was staring towards me with a cheeky expression, the word “cute” never came to my mind.

(TN: pretty boy)

Not just that, his outfit was a shirt with a lot of frills and a red necktie. Above the white tights, he was wearing navy blue pants, dressing just like the idiotic nobles coming straight from comics.

「You are?」

「You?* What’s with that “You*”? How insolent!」

(*TN: Omae = Rude way of saying “You”) Even his rebuttal was as expected. My mind was all the more thrown into chaos.

「Well fine, I finally meet someone who listens. Let’s ignore the insolence.」

The boy with whom I’d normally never associate myself said those incomprehensible words, but just as he said, he was the only person I could talk to. I couldn’t afford to drive him away.

「Where is this place?」

With the boy’s question, the thought “that’s what I wanted to know” came to mind but– 「The outskirts of the slum area.」

What came out of my mouth was a totally different phrase.

「Slums.. No good!*」

(*read: Shimatta!)

The face of the boy instantly turned pale, visible even though it was a bit dim. This response was just like when someone is lost, however, what concerned me

the most was where was this slum area.

The answer to that was — the northern outskirts of the Grand Flamm Kingdom capital city.

Though I had never heard of such a country, for some reason the name suddenly floated in my mind.

Something was strange. My face that had seemingly drained of blood was just the same color as the boy's.

「Hey, you. I want to go to the main streets. Can you guide me?」

「I can, but.. I can't.」

This time, the answer that floated in my mind was what my mouth uttered.

I had knowledge of things that I don't really know. Though these words have also struck my mind, I didn't even know their meaning.

「What do you mean by you can, but can't!? If it's a reward, I can give you one!」

With the way, the boy was talking, as if in a hurry, my train of thought was suspended. For starters, I had to find a way to deal with this situation.

「… I'm injured so I can't move.」

「Injured? I see. Wait a bit.」

Though I thought he would call for help, that expectation was betrayed as the boy started to move from his position. With a serious expression, he began to chant words.

「I shall bestow healing magic upon thee.」

Those were the words that I heard while listening carefully.

「Blessed wind, come and Heal!」

A little bit after the words of the boy, my whole body was suddenly caressed by the wind.

Just a small breeze. Though it was only a small amount, it was indeed the wind. Understanding the meaning behind the actions of the boy, I was astonished.

「How is it?」

The boy asked in high spirits. If it was about whether the injury had healed, then there was no mistake.

I tried to move my body cautiously.

「Kuh..」

My voice unintentionally leaked out. Though my mind had become calmer, the injury did not dissipate.

「I'm still just a child. When I grow up I will be able to do better.」

He must have had figured it out from my response. Although the boy made excuses, there was no mistake, the boy tried to heal my injury with magic.

「The pain has lessened. If it's just walking, then I can do it.」

「I-Is that so? Then guide me.」

Rather than for the boy's sake, I also wanted to hurry up and get out of this obviously dangerous place, so finally being able to move my body albeit still riddled with pain, I decided to get out of here.

Though it was indeed painful, it's not as if I couldn't move with it.

More or less, I understood the effect of the magic that the boy used.

「..This way.」

Again, my mind filled up with information of this place on its own, and though I didn't know why, for the moment I was grateful for it.

Provided that the information was indeed correct, which I still can't help but doubt.

Anyway, after being able to go to a safer place, I would have to ascertain my situation either from the boy or someone more knowledgeable.

That was right. That place was dangerous to both me, and the boy.

With the fear within me spontaneously breaking out, my walking pace increased.

However, those footsteps had to be stopped for a certain reason.

「You. So you are still alive?」

Said the man who appeared in front of me.

I know this man. My injuries were caused by this man's violence and not just that, this man had done even worse things to me before.

He had also done things that you normally can't tell other people about. No matter how I hated him, an existence where just hating is not enough, that was who this person had been to me.

「Well, that doesn't matter. For now, it's about the brat behind you.」

Sure enough, his curiosity was pointed towards the boy behind me.

A boy who obviously came from a rich family judging by the way he was dressed. For the people who live in this place, a perfectly suitable prey. Even I to a certain extent, after sending him off, had thought to take his valuables– No, that wasn't me, but that was what had been occupying my mind.

「You'll have to hand this brat over. This prey would just be wasted on you.」

If it was me, I would just take his belongings at most. However, when it came to this man, he would threaten the boy's home in order to obtain the ransom. "Indeed, it would be wasted on me" – Why did such thought even enter my head, I didn't understand.

「Insolents! Just who do you think am I?」

「Hell if I know! In this place, as long as you have lots of cash, it doesn't matter who you are!」

「I am Vincent Woodville! I'm a noble of house Windhill!」

「What!?」

As long as one was rich, it didn't matter who one was. Though that man said so, it had to have limits.

House Windhill to me, or to be exact to the person within me, were a famous aristocratic family that everyone knew. It was one of the famous three aristocratic families that supported this country, and those who dared to scowl at the three families had no place in this country.

Though such thinking would be normal, that man was different. With a broad grin on his face, he walked towards the boy. Though I already knew that, that man was just hopelessly stupid– with this thought inside me, I was in complete agreement.

「If it's for the lord's kid, no matter what kind of demand, it won't be a problem. I can mess around for all my life.」

「D-Don't think of doing something stupid!」

「I'm not stupid!」

No matter how you thought about it, he WAS stupid, wasn't he? The stupidity of that man didn't matter. The problem was securing my safety. How would the surrounding people see this situation?

They would probably believe, that I fooled the kid to deliver him to that man.

Supposing that was the case, I could see the ending of my life. Though it was a life of anything goes, dying without doing even a single good thing was getting on my nerves– no that wasn't it. I didn't want to die like this.

That thought reverberated through my whole body. As for who I really was back then, somehow it didn't matter anymore.

「If you behave properly, you won't experience any pain. As long as they pay the price, you can reunite with your family safe and sound.」

「Is that true?」

It seemed as though the boy was also an idiot. Once you saw the face of the kidnapper, there was no way that you would make it out alive.

Also, if the boy ever came back to his family, the aristocratic house would use its full strength to deliver retribution. There was no mistake, if you got caught, you'd be killed. I couldn't think of escaping and even if I managed somehow, I didn't have funds to fully escape that situation.

There was no other choice. I had to resolve myself.

「That's right, so come here obediently.」

「… as I thought, I refuse. Take me to my house immediately, and if you do that,

I will bestow a sufficient reward on you.」

「That's why I said that as long as I get the money, I will send you home, right?」

「A-After all..」

This man firstly planned to finish it with a gentle face, so that the boy's apprehensiveness would be soothed. He didn't seem to be conscious of me at all.

Should I do it? No, I had to do it!

There was another person that stayed in my mind, and as his consciousness broke through, my body began to move accordingly.

Slowly without being noticed, I sneaked forward and approached the back of that man. I took out the knife that I was hiding. This was the only weapon I managed to keep in times like those.

All the others were taken by that man several hours ago.

This time, I definitely had to not fail.

The man seized both hands of the boy. Thanks to him squatting, the back of his head was fully exposed right before my eyes. I raised my hand over to strike at the nape of that man's neck with my knife.

But the boy who turned his sight towards me was really an idiot.

Because of his gaze, the man turned his head back and had noticed me.

「You bastard! What are you trying to do!?」

「uwaaa~!」

While I shouted due to the exploding fear within me, my hand swung downwards towards the face of the man.

「Gu..guah!」

What remained on my hand was an unpleasant sensation, but I had no time to ponder such thoughts.

Pulling out the knife that struck that man's mouth, I immediately swung it downwards again.

The knife stabbed towards the right eye of the man.

Not yet, I knew, because the man was still shrieking.

「Dieeeeeeeeeeee!」

I struck with the knife at his face continuously.

No words came out of the man's mouth any longer, and he slowly fell forwards.

「Haa.. Haa.. Ha..」

My breathing hurt, my heart was thumping so hard, that it almost brought pain to my chest.

「Y-You..」

「…Run away.」

「R-Run away you say..」

「Follow me, let's hurry up and escape!」

「R-right!」

I eagerly ran towards the path that led to the main street. Though I wanted to throw away the bloodstained knife in my hands, because my hand had stiffened, I couldn't let go. No matter how much I shook my hand, I couldn't let go of the weapon.

「O-oy, wait! Slow down a little bit.」

The boy shouted from behind my back. Because I couldn't leave him alone, I slowed my pace down, as he said.

For me, the boy was an important source of money. Demanding a reward would let me obtain sufficient amount of funds.

It was capital, that I had to obtain, to get away from the capital.

「Has he died?」

「I don't know.」

「You've killed someone, huh?」

「If I didn't do so, I would be the one killed.」

「Is that so.」

And so, the boy once again turned silent. Though I didn't really want to kill a person, it was better to do so than being killed.

I killed a person. Because of the words of the boy, that thought finally weighed down on me.

Suddenly, my hands began to tremble. The knife that I couldn't let go of before easily slipped out of my hand. The shaking has spread towards my whole body resulting in my feet halting.

「Oy! What's the matter?」

I couldn't even make myself answer the boy's question anymore.

「Hey? Are you alright? We have to hurry and escape.」

I knew that much. I killed that man, but he had comrades. If I didn't get out of the slum area, next time I would be the one to be killed.

However, no matter what, I could not move. It was not as if my body wasn't really capable of moving. It was because my consciousness began turning hazy, to the point I couldn't even hear the voice of the boy anymore.

「….! Hur….! Where….!?」

I could neither understand him anymore nor had the strength to think about it.

And so my consciousness was slowly swallowed by darkness.

◇◇◇

When I woke up, in front of me was a grainy, wooden ceiling. It seemed that for some reason, I was sleeping on a bed.

It was a dream — is what I thought but, I noticed that the ceiling in front of me was not something that was familiar.

I rose in panic and glanced around, the surroundings of the bed had a retro feeling to them, with refined furniture in place, a western-styled room.

Inclining my head towards my right, I noticed another person.

Upon noticing, I instantly began to feel awfully down.

That person approached the bed.

「It seems you have woken up. I will report it, so I will leave for a bit. Please wait for me right here.」

Brown hair and blue eyes. No matter how you looked at her, she was not Japanese. In addition, she was wearing a maid uniform and had a calming voice.

She left the room.

It seemed I was still in the dream. If I was already awake then that was– Being able to calm myself, I decided to think about things.

What was that world?– I couldn't come up with an answer to the question.

What was that country called? — The Gran Flamm Kingdom was the certain answer that floated in my mind.

Just who was I? Moriya Ryou was the name that floated in my mind. That was obvious.

However, inside me, there was another person. There could be no mistake about it.

What should I do from there on? Did that person within me know?

Where was I born? The answer was Tokyo.

It just wouldn't go well at all. As long as I was still "myself", was it not possible to ask for answers? The other me, before I lost consciousness, did the information floating in my head at that time come from him?

Thinking about it, what I was pondering then was useless speculation. For now, I had to attempt to do everything on my own.

Where was my house in the town– the answer, the address came to my mind. There was a decrepit shelter made of planks that seemed to serve as my bedroom. Various things were scattered around the floor.

My way of inquiring my other self was successful.

I tried asking about my parents, so to speak, in this world. As I thought, there were none. If you also questioned the other me, the answer would be the same. I had no parents.

Who was the man I killed? The name Dan surfaced in my mind. It was a man whom I knew by the name. Also, that Dan was someone whom I hated a lot. It was a man that I didn't know, but was hated by the other me.

Why was that? Having asked my head that, I immediately regretted that decision. A lot of memories began to flood in. Him throwing abusive language at me was the norm, receiving violence was also frequent. It was not just that. That man called Dan, has also sexually assaulted me before. The me, who was also a male.

That moment, as the feeling of humiliation surfaced on my mind, I began to nurture hate against him.

That was right. It was me, myself.

Around this time, I began to realize, that my body was also small. Though the long hair that stretched down, was the same color I was used to, the skin of my body seemed paler.

It was likely, that rather than I having turned into a child, I had broken into the body of the other me. Was it possession or reincarnation, I did not know, but for the time being, that was just how it was.

I was in a different world than the one that I had been born into. As for me on that other world, he most likely had already died.

I tried pulling the memories from before when I had been riding the bus. What I could remember was only riding the bus from the station, entering the ring road and the inside of the bus turning strangely bright. It was not the light that you would experience upon reincarnating. I could clearly recognize, that the strange light, that brightened the inside of the bus, was coming from some other source.

When trying to remember what happened next, I couldn't recall anything.

Trying to make sense of it from there, maybe I instantly died from a collision accident. I shouldn't have sat on that seat. Because I had been young, I should've had continued standing and maybe by having done that, I wouldn't have had died.

Thinking about such things, for now, would be moot.

For now, I would think about things that I had to focus my thoughts on.

The other me was suggesting, that I should leave the capital immediately. It was due to fear of revenge from that Dan's comrades.

With that, I was in full agreement. Even I didn't want to die at all.

However the problem was, the current me was an orphan and had no one to rely on. I only managed to keep on living by eating the food scraps of the slums. In order to escape, I needed money and skills among other things.

That was not it, there's something I had to figure out before that.

Where was this place?

Had I escaped?

Was it possible, that I had been caught already by someone who should never have caught me?

I immediately got out of my bed and glanced towards the window. I could see blue sky spreading outside the window. Below me was a beautiful garden and I was on the third floor. It would be impossible to escape through the window.

Moving towards the door, a sound coming from other side entered my ears. As if in the right timing, I suddenly heard a woman's voice.

「Ariel-sama! You must not go! You must not approach that room!」

I didn't have to listen carefully because it clearly entered my ears. Knowing the meaning behind those words, I immediately returned to bed.

Just as I did so, the door opened roughly. Slowly turning my head towards the door, what I saw there, was the same blonde and green eyes of the boy from the slum area, except this time it was a girl.

The girl was not chubby at all, she also had very striking, almond shaped eyes. Overall, she had a lovely face.

That girl who approached me with a cheeky glare began to gaze in my direction.

The words, that came from the girl as she opened her mouth were.

「Fuun~ I see, so you are the pet that my onii-sama brought with him.」

It was the most impolite word.

I took back all my previous remarks. She was not cute at all, she was just an impudent young girl. That was, what I thought, but my curiosity was piqued by a word that the girl said.

「Onii-sama has brought with him?」

「That's right. The filthy boy, that **that** onii-sama of mine has brought with him.」

Though filthy was a bit excessive, I wasn't in the position to voice complaints.

「By brought you meant?」

「You, who fell unconscious in that slum, was brought up by **that** onii-sama of mine on his back, and was saved by him.」

「He… on his back.」

Though I was concerned, as to why would she press the word "that" every time, the fact that the boy carried me here was certain.

「That's right.」

「Which means, this house is?」

「Oh my, haven't you heard me? This place is the mansion of Marquess Windhill.」

For some reason, while puffing her chest, the girl declared such. Thinking that it was strangely cute, I couldn't help but smile.

Being brought to that boy's house, perhaps I could rest with ease now.

「What are you smiling at?」

The girl asked me, who had smile floating in his face.

「I'm thinking that I'm saved.」

「**…..**」

The girl whom I answered, began to look at me in displeasure.

「Is there something wrong?」

「You way of speaking. How impertinent for something like a pet.」

「Saying pet..」

「I am a person of nobility you know? Your way of speaking does not fit your company!」

「That… I apologize for my presumptuousness milady.」

This was my carelessness. This girl was a noble and I was a commoner. It was likely, that I belonged to the lowest class as a person who lived in the slums.

For this world, to have a different class system to my former world, it had to be a rough world.

「Oh my, it seems you can properly speak.」

「Merely a bit, Miss.」

「Well, as long as you are properly disciplined around those parts, then it's good.」

Discipline.

For this girls, it seemed, I was just a pet to the very end.

「But before that, your attire. Your hair is unkempt, in addition somehow… you smell.」

「Do I smell bad, Miss?」

「You do. It's a very unpleasant smell.」

「My apologies.」

To be blunt, those words hurts my feelings, but as for the girl, it seemed she didn't really care about that in the slightest.

「Lisa」

「Yes!」

As the girl called, the appearance of the attendant behind her was that of a woman. It's probably her handmaiden.

「Make this thing clean. Brush his body, tidy up his hair, give him a suitable appearance becoming of a pet of my onii-sama, a legitimate child of the house

Windhill.」

「Yes. Certainly.」

Was the pet treatment already decided?

「Well then, when you've become tidy, I'll meet you again.」

「…」

「I will meet you again.」

「… I will await that anxiously milady.」

「Yes. Well then, excuse me.」

It seems that was the right answer. The girl with the aloofly composed expression left the room.

What remained was me and the handmaiden.

「This way.」

She had a dismissive look and, as it subsided, I was told to follow her.

It seemed I was not very welcome. I didn't really mind that. It wasn't as if I would be there for long.

Only to let the pressing danger pass. The next hurdle would be to obtain a reward and gain a fund big enough to leave the capital.

I wondered what I should do to achieve the goal. There was too much to think of and it felt like my head would explode.

But even so, I had to properly think about it. Me now wasn't capable of anything but thinking after all.

# In the end, just who the heck am I?

Okay, i'll be translating this and because it's way more easier I might be able to update faster for this series. According to the arc titles (at the very least), it seems this is about the MC's transmugation(isn't that what they call it nowadays?) to a certain game character. It seems the author plans to keep both personality which for me, would be a bit confusing but nevertheless it's still a promising one.

*Anyway, I tried searching if anyone is translating it already but found none and it might have escaped my cyclop's eyes (**read : sore eyes**) so if someone is already translating this series, tell me.*

Enjoy~

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**Akuyaku Reijo Ni Koi Wo Shite – Chapter 2 :**
***In the end, just what the heck am I!?***

I followed the handmaiden down the corridors.

As we walked around, I became all the more surprised having come to understand the vastness of this building. A hallway that continued to expand as if endless, and in the walls doors that lined up to the point of being countless.

Being in one of those large hotels probably gave the same feeling, but because I had never visited one of those, it was just a wild guess.

Through that corridor, numerous people were walking.

There were females wearing the same maid clothing as the one that was worn by the woman called Lisa. The males, on the other hand, were wearing suits, or rather maybe it was closer to a tuxedo. I had also noticed the people in helmets that rarely passed by, I wondered if they were something like escorts or knights

It was very similar to the medieval Europe that one saw in the movies.

Though I was glancing at those who we passed by through the opening in my bangs quickly enough to make them not realize that I was looking, those others were looking at me without any restraint.

What was a dirty child doing there? Even though I couldn't hear it, I understood what was going on in their heads.

Just how long did we have to walk? Descending one more level and then exiting the building, what we arrived into was a courtyard with a fountain located ahead.

「Wash your body here.」

「Yes?」

「I will leave the towel here. You can call me when you are done until then I will wait.」

「… Okay.」

My questions would be ignored.

As if she already said what she had to, the handmaiden left.

Was taking a bath for an orphan of the slums such a waste or something? Or was it that taking a bath was a luxury for the other people?

Upon asking inside my head to the other me, the only thing I understood was, that I had never taken a bath myself.

There was a spherical pipe that projected out of the fountain and from there, water was continuously flowing. There were countless water buckets around the place where water poured. At the very least, it functioned not only as a fountain but also a bathing place.

Holding that bucket in my hands, I let the flowing water fill it.

Thank goodness, the current season wasn't winter. In the first place, I didn't even know if this world had seasons — no, it seems it did.

Would I be able to manage with this weather difference?

I began to take off the robe-like clothes I wore. There was nothing underneath

them, I was stark naked. Though it was embarrassing, right then I was just a kid and by convincing myself with that, I managed to bear with the embarrassment.

I poured the water starting from my head. Looking at it as it flowed over my skin down to my toes, my mood began to worsen. Just from being poured on, the water became muddy. Just how much dirt was there on my body?

Scooping water again, this time, I poured water on myself while scratching my head. I ignored the fact that the water got even dirtier and began to feel good.

While scratching my head, I poured water over myself again and again.

Being able to use such clean water in this way, it seems it was the first time for the other me. I started to feel happiness filling my heart.

When the amount of dirt flowing in the water has decreased, I started to pour it while scratching my scalp. But having to do it manually seemed like it would be a pain, so I knelt below the pipe that stretched from the fountain and holding my head underneath I began to wash.

Because my body was just that of a small child, it was easy to do so.

Though originally I didn't particularly love bathing, bathing like this would never have been a bother at all, rather I could have gotten addicted to this wonderful feeling.

With this situation, though wishing for shampoo would have been useless, I began to want for soap. Was there soap? Though they probably had one, I guessed that it came with a high price.

Someone like me, used to living in a world of abundant resources in the past, would have to deal with a lot of hardships by living in this world. When that thought entered me, I immediately dismissed it from my mind.

Thinking about it, only negative thoughts had been surfacing in my head.

Right then, I just wanted to continue enjoying this bath.

Because I was already done with my hair, I switched to my body. Just washing with water and scrubbing, caused crumbling bits of dirt to come off. Suddenly realizing something, I began to search for an item that separated from me in the fountain.

My objective was unexpectedly found immediately.

It was a stone with a rough surface. I picked it up and started using it to scrub my body making the dirt come off with a bit of pain.

Because I could not reach my back, I lied down and scratched the grime off using fountain surface.

The truth was, I wanted to wash my body immediately after entering the fountain. but thinking that I would probably be scolded, I stopped myself.

Not minding the fact my body was feeling cold, I intently continued bathing.

After a considerable time, the handmaiden appeared in my view, but I was still stark naked.

Though my appearance was that of a child, the person inside was a fine young man. Being seen nude would be really embarrassing, so I quickly wiped my body with a towel and immediately put on some clothes.

My hair was still soaking wet. Covering it with a towel, I immediately wiped it dry. Because it was as long as a girl's hair, it was irritating.

「Are you done?」

「Yes. I'll just dry my hair.」

「If you're going to wipe it, do it with this.」

Saying that, she handed me a new towel. Receiving it, I wiped my hair. Though it was obviously easier to wipe it with a dry towel, it would've been better if she handed both of them over from the start. Though those thoughts entered my mind, I didn't voice them.

With the moisture being removed to some extent, I gathered my irritating hair together and tied it with the towel.

My body was refreshed. My line of sight was also good. Anyhow, it felt good.

「Thank you for waiting.」

「…」

Though I called out to the handmaiden, there was no answer. Thinking about what was wrong, I turned my gaze towards her, she was standing there stiff with

her eyes wide open.

「Erm..」

「…Oh, you are done… Let's return to your room.」

Though the handmaiden had quite a complex facial expression, she said nothing more and headed towards the building.

The confused me could only follow after her.

During the time returning to the room, the surrounding gazes were turned towards me without restraint. If I was to speak, I would say I felt like they just got worse.

There were people taken aback, there were also ones frankly frowning, or showing unpleasant feelings. I knew it, it got worse.

Thinking that something turned weird after washing my body, I began to check myself and rub my face to examine it, but even having done that, I understood nothing. Since it couldn't be helped, I began walking with my face straight ahead, as if not minding the stares from around me, Climbing to the third floor, I had passed through countless doors on my way. Upon returning to my former room, the handmaiden halted.

「We have prepared a meal in the room.」

「T-Thank you very much.」

「…Please stay inside and behave well.」

「Okay..」

As always, her gaze remained cold.

The social status discrimination in this world might be worse than I thought.

If that was the case, being allowed inside the house and having food and room prepared beforehand must have been a considerable show of hospitality already.

No matter how I thought of it, I would never understand.

When I entered the room, as the handmaiden said, there was food on the table.

It was a piece of round bread, salad, scrambled egg and orange juice.

Upon looking at those, an intense feeling of hunger began to assault me. Thinking about it, ever since I've regained consciousness in this world, I had not eaten once. As for the other me, it was even worse than that, it seems he usually had an empty stomach for the whole day. Though he had gotten used to it.

I sat on the chair and began by trying the orange juice.

「…Tasty.」

The strong flavor was delicious, to the point that made one doubt what the orange juice of the former world really was.

With my expectations raised, I began to put the bread in my mouth. It was tough and seemed dried out, the former world's one was better.

Afterward came the scrambled egg. It was really great and also had a strong flavor.

The salad was the same. Every vegetable's taste was very strong, even without a dressing it was surprisingly delicious.

The other me was also delighted. It seems I had never tasted such fresh food in my whole life …Fresh?

Information suddenly flooded my mind but was immediately flushed away. It's probably because I had been reminded of things better not remembered during meal time.

The food in front of me disappeared in just a blink of an eye. Although I was far from having my stomach full, I did feel sated. It seemed that the other me was a very light eater.

My body felt relief, even my stomach was very satisfied. Due to that, I decided to thoroughly think through my current situation.

No matter how you looked at it this place was definitely different to my former world.

Though it could possibly be just a dream, trying to cling to that possibility would be pointless.

From then on, I had to figure out how should I live in this world.

Though it had an atmosphere similar to medieval Europe, or rather because it was like the medieval Europe, I had no idea about how did the society work.

Though I could somewhat rely on my other self, I couldn't really expect much. Not only was he just a child, the only thing he knew about was the special environment of the slums, with little idea of anything else.

And as I already knew from the memories coming to my mind, he suffered quite a lot of hardships.

It seemed the time for one to be able to understand his/her surroundings was when reaching adulthood.

I had memories of living under one roof with adults. Because it had been in the slums the weren't exactly engaged in honest work, but there were no reasons to be troubled about food. Even if it was relative to the standards of my other self.

When those adults had disappeared, the situation had turned worse.

There was a limit to how one could get food as a very young child, he had no choice but to scavenge at the dump site. Looking for edible scraps in the piles of garbage was not easy either, after all, he was not the only one searching.

There was mad scramble towards the garbage of good quality, and he, not having the strength to win, had to turn towards the refuse others ignored. Digestive problems to the point it felt like agony had happened countless of times.

The hardships were not limited to only that.

Though he himself didn't know why it seemed he was hated by his surroundings.

Those who wouldn't permit him to get close weren't just a few, in addition, no matter what he did, he would not be forgiven.

That was the atmosphere around him.

He was not strong, nor did he have a person to rely on, yet he managed to live in the lawless zone that was the slums. It sure was good that he didn't die.

I also realized the reason why I had been lying bruised in that place before.

The other me had tried to kill that man called “Dan” and his comrades at the time. He had been gathering weapons and been waiting for the right chance for a while, and when the right opportunity arrived, he failed, having the tables splendidly turned on him. He was beaten up to near death and was left battered at the location.

It looked like he was a very proud child.

Even faced with such a disastrous start to life, he did not yield and had a strong enough heart to take action and try to change his situation.

He was greatly different to all the other orphans, having realized that all the things he could never have or reach, gave up on silly dreams and focused on simple bloody-minded survival.

Would I do the same in his place? Could I abandon my hopes so ruthlessly if the situation required? A tide of doubts and questions swelled in my mind.

This body belonged to the other me and he gave up on his future to keep on living. Didn’t I just close the doors on that awaiting life?

That would not do. I would not allow such a thing.

I had to recover the will of this body, I should be able to do so. The being that killed the person before was, in fact, not myself. The actions at that time were not mine, but my other self’s.

I would hand it over, this body.

Originally, this body belonged to him, to begin with anyway.

I willed him to rise, to wake up. The life from that day onward belonged to him, from then on, I would have him live that life according to his will.

Even just a little, that help… He would…

◇◇◇

(*TN: The other him takes over) A strange feeling. This was the second time.I had the sensation of waking up, but I could recall nothing else.

In front of me there was an empty bowl.

It was my first time having that kind of food. Not even mentioning the taste, but just how many years had it been since I had eaten food that smelled good? At the very least, not since that guy had died.

I… There was another self that was living inside of me.

No, that was wrong. Not myself. There was a guy inside my head who knew various things I had no idea about. Just who was he?

I had lots of memories that I didn't understand at all.

A great many towers, tall enough to make you crane your neck up, were standing in a line.

What was that?

I knew, that it was called a "skyscraper", however, this was my first time hearing that word and still, for some reason, I understood what it meant.

There was a box that was moving as if being pulled by a horse.

What was it?

A car, an automobile.

Though I did not know about it all, for some reason I knew that it was called such.

Even though the night sky was spread overhead, the surroundings were bright. Various colors were sparkling all around. Was this a well-known magic? It was not, answered someone within me.

Though I was curious about those things, I put them aside.

What was all that?

A different world. That other person inside me seemed to be born in a different world.

Though I struggled to believe it, I knew that there could be no doubt.

I didn't know what was what anymore.

In the first place, I thought I should've died.

Dan had tormented me terribly. Slums were not a naive place where one would

let a would-be assassin live, but I was alive and I killed that bastard.

It was frightening.

After killing the guy whom I hated so much, rather than feeling happy I was overwhelmed with fear. Unable to stop shivering and unable to move, I had lost consciousness.

This place was where that noble brat was living.

The treatment I received until now was not bad. However, the other party was nobility. They wouldn't feel gratitude towards someone like me, that was apparent from the gaze of that handmaiden.

That stare was similar to those of the bastards at the slums, disgust, mixed with something else, a gaze where one can only feel displeasure. Though the guy inside me had no idea, I had experienced it many times.

As I thought, it would be better to abandon my greed after all.

After getting out of this mansion, how should I live afterward?

The other guy knew various things that I had no idea about.

That should prove to be helpful.

Suddenly, I heard a voice in the hallway again.

It seemed that the cheeky noble brat would make another appearance.

When the door opened, that little girl entered as I expected. Though she was puffing her chest conceitedly, because she had such little body I just found it ridiculous.

「It seems you have become clea–」

After approaching me, she stiffened as if taken aback.

It was a bit different to those guys in the hallway.

「…Pretty.」

「Huh?」

The unexpected words the little brat muttered made me surprised.

「Hey, those eyes. Why are the colors different?」

「…Colors?」

I had no idea what was this girl talking about. Saying that the colors of my eyes were different, wasn't it normal for others to have different eye colors?

「Have you ever tried looking in the mirror?」

「…No.」

There was no way that the folks in the slum area would have something that expensive. The daughter of aristocrats didn't even know that much?

「Well then, have a look.」

The girl took a small mirror from her pocket and presented it to my face.

Taking it would be unnecessary. My face was already reflected on the surface, but because it was too small and didn't show the whole thing, I had to move my face from side to side The color of my eyes, it was different indeed.

It's not that the color of the girl's eyes was different from mine, but my eyes differed in color from each other. Blue right eye, red left eye, I had never met such kind of a human.

I finally realized what differentiated me from the other people.

「See, doesn't it differ?」

The little girl said delightedly to the bewildered me.

I had no idea what was so fun about it.

「Yeah…」

I decided to return a vague reply.

「 Though your eyes indeed are pretty red and blue, you also have a lovely face. Even your hair is long, just like a girl somehow .」

The girl said that while bringing her face close and staring at my eyes. Was I being praised or being spoken ill of? I didn't know. I thought that, at any rate, I should at least cut the hair.

「Ariel-sama! Please distance yourself!」

The handmaiden raised her voice probably thinking we were too close for

opposite genders, even if we were still just kids.

「Oh please be quiet, I wanted to look at this child's face carefully.」

A voice louder than handmaiden's was raised. It looked like the selfish noble girl would not do as she was asked. But even so, the servant didn't withdraw obediently.

「That's no good! Being too close to those with heterochromia will bring misfortune.*」

「Heterochromia?」

It seemed it was her first time hearing it. I, on the other hand, had heard it countless times, albeit I did not know the meaning. However, with that, I learned the reason why I was hated.

Apparently, humans with the same condition as me were a sinister existence.

「What is heterochromia?」

「Just like in this boy, the color of the eyes is different.」

「Why would it bring misfortune?」

「That is…」

「If there is no reason, then there is no need to mind it. I do not believe in things like "misfortunes". After all, its face is this pretty.」

「However…」

「Be silent. If you speak another word, I will have you vanish from this house.」

「…Yes, milady.」

With a mind that would only follow her own will, this noble girl was outrageously overbearing.

Though the maid didn't say anything else, as told, her face was clearly tinged with displeasure.

It looked like the little lady was not loved much, but then having others deal with such personality frequently, that much was obvious.

Not even giving the maid a shred of concern, the girl looked at my eyes with

great interest.

「Hey, do you know how to use magic?」

「Haa?」

「It's magic you know? Magic.」

「There's no way I could.」

「Is that so? Even though you have such a beautiful face.」

I couldn't understand that talk at all. There was no way a commoner like me could use magic. It could only be used by the descendants of high-class nobles.

「…But if someone teaches you, maybe you'll be able to?」

Like I told her, there was no way I would.

「Well, let's leave it for now. You will be residing here from now on after all, I shall find out little by little.」

「Huh?!」

「What are you surprised about?」

「Live here…?」

「Is that not natural? You are onii-sama's pet, you know? Therefore, you are also my pet.」

「…Pet.」

「You, what is your name?」

While I was bewildered due to being called a pet, my name was asked. It seems she didn't concern herself with people's reactions.

Name… I couldn't remember my name. The thing that came to my mind was not a name that belonged to me.

Just who was I?

「So you don't even have a name? Then I shall bestow you one.」

「Ah, no.」

I absolutely didn't want that. That's what I thought right away.

「Then if you have one, tell me.」

「…Ryou. Ryou Moriya.」

Since I had no other choice, I told her that guy's name. I instantly regretted it a bit.

Somehow, it was a weird name.

「…Riyo, Rio.」

It seems the little girl thought the same. It's hard to pronounce.

「…Rion. Oh well, your name is going to be Rion, okay?」

「No, that's n…」

「It's Rion. I have decided. Do you have any complaints?」

「…none.」

Yielding to the little girl's coercion, I accepted. I could also feel the other guy voicing out his complaints.

I told him to endure it. I was trying to do the same.

If I refused her then, this girl would, without a doubt, think of an even weirder name.

Knowing that Rion was not the worst name out there, it seems he was convinced.

「Then, Rion. After tidying up your hair, let's dress you up afterward?」

「Hair? Tidy up?」

「You have to be beautiful to be a worthy pet.」

「…」

At last, I finally realized the meaning of the word "Pet". Pet, animal, a being that was to be brought up by a human to love. In that case, it fit, because humans also belonged to the animal category.

Even knowing she wouldn't say anything, I reflexively glanced towards the handmaiden looking for salvation. She said nothing while shaking her head slightly. It looked like she also had kindness in her, but since she couldn't veto

anything, her thoughts didn't matter.

In the end, while being turned this way and that all day long, I was being toyed with by the little girl.

By tidying my hair she only meant gathering the ends together, so the length didn't really change.

Having my hair smeared with oil brought enough difficult feelings already, but something was also spread on my face.

The clothes prepared for changing were the little girl's hand-me-downs.

Even though I was a guy.

Another memory was added to the list of things I didn't want to ever remember.

Transgender, someone who transcends the gender fence, homosexual, bisexual… While I was indeed violated by a guy before, I was not something like that at all!

(TN: he literally used transgender. "トランスジェンダ/Toransujienda") (EN: violated literally meant raped)

# For the time being, my job is decided!

Explanation chapter, the hardest of all!
I hope I delivered that properly, particularly around the peerage part.

Maybe I'm in need of an editor after all.

Anyway, Enjoy!

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 3:**
***For the time being, my job is decided!***

EN : Previous chapter finished in control of original personality, now we're back to Ryou

When I opened my eyes, I saw I was in a different room than yesterday.

One to which I was guided to last night and told that it belonged to me.

There was a bed, a small desk and a wardrobe placed inside. Even with just that, there was hardly any space left in the narrow room.

Because it was similar to my former world's room, I didn't really mind. Its size had been 4.5 tatami mats with comfort room included, but no bathtub. It had been located about 10 minutes away by bus from the station and its only redeeming feature had been the price.

( EN: That's roughly about 7 square meters or 70 square feet for you imperial heathens )

Those were my memories.

Even though I had already given up on my consciousness, why did I return? I tried both asking him and surrendering my control again, but there was no response.

It was possible that he was just sleeping.

Yesterday was quite tiring after all, particularly on the mind.

That aside, that ojou-sama* was really a typical selfish little princess, huh? Even after doing however she pleased to her surroundings, there was no one to

protest.

(TN: I'll be using ojou-sama because it's more convenient)

With that, I started to worry what kind of woman would she grow up into.

Even though she looked pretty cute.

On that note, my appearance was quite lovely too, huh? Was it because of my former face? When she put the makeup on me and dressed me in female clothes, my reflection in the mirror charmed me completely.

Even though my body was just that of a child, it already offered such glamou– What was I doing getting enticed by myself.

I was not supposed to be a lolicon.

The other me really felt down, huh?

Well, I guessed that was the proper reaction.

You had endured well.

I needed to somehow stop myself from heading down the wrong path.

Suddenly, while thinking about those silly things and wasting my time, I heard a knock on the door.

They were opened without even waiting for a reply.

I thought it would be the ojou-sama again, but it seems it was only the female attendant.

「Have you woken up?」

「Yes. Is there something I should do?」

「You don't have to do anything. Just behave and remain in this room.」

「What do you…」

I started to ask because I got curious about her mode of speech, but her cold gaze stopped me.

「It is yet to be decided how you should be dealt with And no matter what Vincent-sama and Ariel-sama says, the one to do that is going to be the master

of the house.」

「I'll stay here and be a pet?」

The other me aside, this turn of events was favorable for me.

「Someone like you should never be in this house, I'm afraid that's what's going to happen.」

So not because of the owed favors, but due to disgust the source of which was…

「Is it because of… the heterochromia?」

「Yes.」

「Is it that detestable?」

「It is, particularly to the aristocrats.」

「…Why?」

「I have come here to explain the reason to Ariel-sama, but you should be told as well.」

「Please.」

「Do you know that the person's eye color represents his attribute?」

「…No.」

Even If I managed to wake up and try asking the one inside my mind, I doubt he would know a thing about nobility.

「…Let's start from that then. There is noble blood flowing in the aristocrat's veins and it contains mana.」

So this is the reason why the other me thought that no one but nobility could use magic. The quality of a person's blood was different. It was a concept hard to understand for a modern man like me, blood was blood, it should be possible to transfer it with a transfusion, why not do just that?

「A great example of that is the royal family and three great Houses. As the name indicates, the attribute of the Gran Flamm royals is fire. That's why their direct descendants have red colored eyes. The eyes of the king are naturally the

most beautiful scarlet.」

It was fire, so the color was red. Truly easy to comprehend. Though the other colors have yet to be explained, there was already a part that I didn't understand.

「As the name indicates?」

「You… don't even know that?」

「It's because I come from the slums.」

Well, the other me did.

The woman was very surprised, but after giving it a little thought she dismissed the distraction.

「That's right, isn't it. You have probably never studied either. In ancient language, Gran Flamm means【Great Flame】fitting the fire attribute.」

( EN: This is Latin and neat. But since there can be no such thing as consistent naming scheme in a LN editor table flip incoming in 3… 2… 1… )

Hadn't it been that the royal family had picked the name because the fire had been their attribute? I didn't voice the thought to not draw her displeasure and keep the explanation going.

「Aqusmea means【Sacred Water】,Fatillas means【Fertile Soil】and this family's name means【Healing Wind】. The royal family and the three great Houses complete the four elements. That's how special they are.」

(EN: …aaand table flip. This is no longer Latin, just random rubbish. Curse you author, curse you )

The attributes of magic were fire, water, wind and earth. Did they not have light or darkness, or were they just unaware of them? I guessed that even if I asked the female attendant, she probably wouldn't know about it.

「In accordance with those attributes, they all carry specific eye colors, right?」

「That's right. Now then, since you understand the background, let's return to the heterochromia. And why people think it brings misfortune.」

「If the eye color indicates the attribute, then one person having two different

eye colors… Can have neither.」

「Correct. The two elements would contradict each other. Being eligible for two elements will result in not being love by either.」

Again, an odd concept.

What did they mean by “not being loved”? even though the female attendant had a look full of disdain I decided to ask her about it.

「By not being loved you mean?」

「You don’t even know this… The effectiveness of magic depends on the intervention of the world, the four elements. Being loved by them will make one’s magic stronger, lesser affection means weaker effect and if there are no feelings then there will be no results.」

「… So, does it mean that the four elements have a will of their own?」

「The world itself has a will. And since it’s composed of the four elements, it is obvious those also have a will of their own.」

Perhaps the four elements were spirits. However, it seemed that the female attendant was not aware of their existence. Or if she knew, then maybe she was hiding that from me. That was probably due to the rules of the house.

「Does it mean that because you have blue eyes, you can use water magic?」

「Ah?」

It was a total mistake.

Judging from her reaction, that person couldn’t use magic at all.

「I’m sorry. It seems I’ve misunderstood. You are not an aristocrat, right?」

「I am an aristocrat!」

Another blunder.

It looked like this time I’ve made her very angry.

I relaxed my mind a little.

Inwardly I apologized for thinking that I could just ask any question.

「…Ignorance begets impoliteness. Even though it doesn’t concern you as you

will soon leave this place anyway, I'll tell you just in case. I come from the family of a baron.」

Maybe because she saw me feeling down or maybe due to some other reason, the explanations continued.

I felt relieved.

「There's a hierarchy among aristocrats and the barons are on the lowest rung of the ladder. Well, technically there is also a peerage rank called a baronet…」

It seemed that her explanation of this country's aristocratic system went on forever from there.

The most important title, aside from Duke that required a direct connection to the royal family, was Marquess. The parts about Dukes, I couldn't really understand. All I got was that they were king's retainers, highest in rank considering the status and somehow outside the normal hierarchy.

Normal titles, from the highest, would be Marquess followed by Earl, Viscount, and Baron. There were three Marquesses and each one of them had their own respective domain the northern, the western and the eastern territory. Those were vital points in the country's defense.

Earls had their own respective territories under the great three located closer to the center of the country There seemed to be an enormous difference in size of Marquess and Earl holdings.

The three great Houses were special in so many aspects.

Viscounts were used by superior aristocrats as administrators and often entrusted with their own territory and/or a castle.

In Japanese terms a Marquess would be a regional governor, an Earl would be a prefectural governor and a Viscount would be a town mayor.

It felt a bit different, but strictly speaking, I probably didn't need that knowledge anyway.

Female attendant's family was not regarded as a nobility in the truest sense because Baron is an honorary title granted due to achievements and owned no town or territory. Also, it could only be inherited once and second generation

heir would become a Baronet.

Returning to the topic of magic, commoners doesn't have the ability to use it. Baron rank families, due to how the peculiarities of the title, in order to have the ability to use magic had to frequently marry with a family of Viscounts. Their ability to cast spells was not guaranteed.

Unfortunately, she missed that opportunity.

Explaining this much, despite being displeased, was probably because she was a gentle person.

In conclusion, the thicker the bloodline the better the effectiveness of magic.

Which meant for me, who was a commoner with heterochromia symbolizing fire and water that was a horrible combination, magic would definitely be impossible.

My short-lived dream of casting spells vanished.

Feeling depressed again, I heard things that were similar to what was said the day before.

Since the person shouting yesterday was right in front of me and holding her head down, it was definitely someone else.

The selfish ojou-sama arrived.

「Rion! Come with me immediately!」

「Yes milady?」

「Quit being absentminded! This is urgent, you know!?」

The ojou-sama seemed to be in a hurry.

「Ariel-sama, just what is happening?」

「It's about father and the others, they are discussing Rion!」

「Ah… So that's what it is.」

For me this was not really urgent at all, I had already heard about being driven out from the handmaiden.

「They said the way to deal with such sinister existences should be to dispose of

them! I won’t permit such a thing!」

「…Eh?」

「If they see how Rion looks, they will surely reconsider! Rion is such a beautiful pet after all!」

「…」

「Come with me immediately!」

「Yes, milady.」

With the complex feelings coming to my mind, I followed the ojou-sama.

I disliked being a pet, but I hated the prospect of getting killed more!

Because the destination was quite far, walking towards it took forever.

The room I resided in was probably one of the servant quarters and the rooms of the family should be considerably distant.

With that in my mind, we kept on running down the hallway.

The ojou-sama in front of me seemed to be having a hard time, I wonder why was she this desperate? Running to the point of nearly getting winded.

Even though she was an aristocrat…

The last thought was not mine.

It seems the other had woken up. I didn’t really have any particular memories about aristocrats, but it seems I had come to hate them anyway.

I understood those feelings well.

People who had nothing envied those who had everything, even I felt this before.

It’s about coming to resent the unfairness of the world.

「W-We should be near.」

That voice instantly extinguished my gloomy mood. The ojou-sama never stopped running even though her face was marked by pain.

Was I that important for a pet? Thinking about it, I couldn’t help but smile

bitterly at the irony.

「We've arrived… Haa, haa, haa.」

She adjusted her breathing as she held the door. I didn't know why wouldn't she enter immediately.

「Wait a bit. Is my hair disheveled?」

「A little, milady.」

「Fix it.」

「Uhh, okay…」

Looked like she was concerned about her appearance. Was it something that all aristocratic women would fuss about?

Even though she was still out of breath, the ojou-sama was trying to straighten her attire perfectly. This was probably what people called "to correct one's self".

Hesitating a bit I put her disheveled hair in order. Noticing sweat that was starting to show on her forehead I let go of the hair that was tucked together, took the hem of my clothes, and wiped it off.

It seems this kind of thing was not good because her gaze became even more intense.

「H-have you not brought a handkerchief with you?」

「Eh… No, I haven't.」

「Well then, use this.」

She presented a handkerchief that she took out from her purse. I took it and wiped the sweat from her face.

The ojou-sama was quietly keeping her eyes closed. The way she did that made her childishness increase.

「How is it going?」

「Ah… Yes. You look adorable.」

「I-Is that so?」

「Yes.」

「…Well then, fine. Let's proceed.」

With one final deep breath, the ojou-sama went towards the door moving her hands as if she was about to knock.

「Stop fooling around! I have picked that up and it belongs to me!」

We heard a voice inside the room.

It was familiar and belonged to the boy from the day before.

However, saying that a person belonged to him, why were those two siblings capable of such thoughts.

(TN: Okay, from this onward, remember that they have been referring to MC without using gender pronoun so think of *he/him* as neutral, this notice is to avoid contradiction in the latter parts.

EN: Or we might just use "it" since they treat him as an object / pet anyway. )

「Vincent-sama. This is not the time to be selfish.」

「Which part of this is being selfish!? You are tossing out my property on your own accord! This is something to be angry about!」

「However, there is a problem about the thing you've picked up.」

「I see no problems!」

「It is an orphan from the slums. Why are you feeling obliged to such a thing? You should consider that you are being taken advantage of.」

So that was why they would have me dead? Wasn't that too extreme? My outward appearance was that of a child and even the one inside was just 18. I didn't understand why they were so wary about a kid like me.

「I don't feel any obligation at all!」

「But, weren't you saved by him?」

「I have never said something like that! I have not been saved! In fact, I have been the one who saved him!」

「…That…」

「That's why I don't feel obliged in the slightest. The one who should feel in

debt is him.」

Though the reasoning was absurd, perhaps this was the boy's way of protecting me. Though the other me disagreed with that idea.

「He also has heterochromia.」

「It's not like it's contagious!」

「It's not about that!」

「Well then, what is this about?」

「It's not safe to carelessly get close to someone of unknown identity and origin!」

「He is Rion of the slums.」

「That's not what I mean…」

Right after that quiet utterance, without even waiting for him to complete his reply, the ojou-sama proceeded to knock on the door and enter.

I wondered if that was good manners.

「Ariel-sama…」

The man previously talking to the boy spoke with a troubled voice. Was it because he was about to face a formidable opponent? I didn't know.

「This is Rion. You already understand who he is and where he came from, right?」

The declaration beat down the argument about unknown origins.

「Ariel-sama, pardon me, but that is not what I meant.」

「It is wrong to judge a person without even looking at him yourself.」

「Well that is correct indeed, however…」

His line of sight went towards me. Actually not just his, the eyes of everyone in this room turned towards me.

Was the man comfortably sitting on the sofa the Marquess?

Was the beautiful person next to him his wife?

Because the two resembled the ojou-sama, there could be no mistake.

Vincent was sitting in front of the two and the others were standing at the back of the Marquess.

「You, what are you called?」

「They call me Rion, sir.」

「What I want is your real name.」

「It's Ryou.」

「W-what?」

「Ryou, sir.」

「…」

「Please, call me Rion.」

「…I understand.」

I wondered why Ryou was so hard to comprehend. Maybe when I speak in Nihongo, the words coming out are different?

「Where are your parents?」

「I don't have any. They have died when I was still small.」

「… How did you live after that?」

「Scavenging, sir. I was too young to work after all.」

「So you have never worked?」

「I have done chores, but that's not a profession.」

「Well then, where did you learn to speak in this way?」

The man threw that question as if he had triumphed. It seemed he thought that he had obtained some sort of evidence. Using Keigo* with expectations of a better result might have been a mistake on my part.

(TN: Respectful way of speaking.)

「From my dead parents, sir.」

I decided to lie with an innocent face for the time being.

「What have your parents done for a living?」

「I do not know. My parents have never spoken about their jobs.」

That was the truth and also more of a general rule. The jobs of slum dwellers were mostly shady, so not telling details to their children was the norm.

「When did you lose your parents?」

「I was around two years old, I don't really remember the exact date.」

「Are you telling me you do not remember the day your parents died?」

「Sir, I do not even know what day is it now.」

Coming from the slums made fabricating my identity really easy.

「What was the cause of death?」

「I don't know, when I woke up they were already dead. It's not something unusual in the slums.」

「What do you plan to do after this?」

Since I didn't seem to be shaken even a bit by the interrogation-like exchange, his wariness increased. It seemed we had arrived at a stalemate. Somehow I knew what kind of answer he wanted there.

「I have never given it a thought sir. There was no time yesterday.」

「…Then how about thinking about it now?」

「Right here? Is it really required?」

「What!?」

「What I want to do is my own problem. Though this may seem a bit rude, it is of no concern to the people present here.」

「… Do you mean, you don't want to be meddled with by this family?」

「Sir, I do not understand the question. What kind of answer do you expect? If it's about not wanting to be involved, then it would be better for the answer to come from your side.」

「That is…」

This man probably had no authority to make that decision. That's why by finding faults in my responses, he would let the surroundings have information to make the judgment.

Although the worst outcome might have gotten me killed, I really couldn't stand that man.

And anyway, I didn't want things to go his way.

「It seems my son has been in your care.」

Suddenly, the man sitting on the sofa spoke. Because he said "his son", it confirmed that it was the Marquess.

「It would be rude not to say that it went both ways your excellency.」

「Both ways?」

「I have saved your son from being taken hostage and as I fell unconscious when we were about to escape, he saved me in turn.」

「I see. So it was "give and take".」

「Yes your excellency.」

「Then I offer you the freedom to do what you want next. I can even send you home.」

「「Father!」」

When I thought the matter settled, the siblings shouted simultaneously. I forgot that the two had opposed it. Despite thinking myself calm, I might still have been agitated after all.

「This thing belongs to me!」

「That is correct father, this is our pet.」

As my life was spared already, I wanted them to stop that talk already.

「Is it not too big to be your pet, however?」

Excellency, even you!?

「It's fine. Since it always does as I say and most importantly, it's beautiful.」

「…Well, that is indeed correct. However, it's too early for you Vincent. You must grow a little bit more.」

「Why?」

「That's… That's just the way it is.」

I wondered what was the Marquess talking about? I felt like he was misunderstanding something.

「That's right. Besides, the partner must not be a child or mother cannot approve of such a thing. Well, if it had reached the marriageable age I could probably agree.」

The words of both parents were complimenting each other. However, as I thought something was strange.

「Indeed. However, even if the other party is that beautiful, for her to become Vincent's concubine, she has to have a certain pedigree.」

「Well, it would be just a mistress then there would be no problems.」

「I see. Mistress, huh? In that case…」

Were they convinced now? Or rather, what was the difference between concubine and mistress? It was not the time to think about that! There was an even bigger problem.

「Umm…」

「What is it?」

「I am a boy, though.」

「…Whaat!?」

I didn't make my gender clear before, but even though your daughter was making a fuss, was it actually that important?

Or did the gender of the orphan you picked up not really matter?

「Well then, what are you going to use him for Vincent?」

「What for? A lot of things.」

(TN:(ᵔ◡ᵔ), I'm sorry. I'll admit it, I've been waiting for the right time to use that.)

「…As a valet?」

「Something like that.」

「I see. However, we already have a valet.」

「Ah, if that's Vincent-sama desire, I will resign.」

Said the guy who was interrogating me before.

So this guy was a valet.

Considering that, he was quite ahead of himself. Besides, what made him so happy?

「Well then, what are you going to do from now on?」

「Because I would be troubled by losing a job, if possible I'd like to attend to Erwin-sama instead. 」

「Erwin? A full-time valet of Erwin…」

I heard an unfamiliar name from the mouth of the Marquess. Because this was a discussion about valets, was he perhaps another sibling of the two?

「Well, that's fine I guess. However, he must undergo a training to be Vincent's valet. And as to who will we leave that to…」

「I shall see to that milord. I am the one handing the position over after all.」

「That would be good. Well then…」

The Marquess looked at me steadily… I already knew why.

「It's Rion, sir.」

The Marquess didn't seem to consider me worth worrying about.

「Well Rion, starting today you are Vincent's valet. His well-being will now be your responsibility.」

「Yes, sir… Eh?」

How did it end up that way?

Wasn't the conversation about driving me out of the house?

Wouldn't, being a valet, mean that I would be staying here forever?

Why?

Being informed that the discussion was over, I was driven out of the room. But that question kept repeating in my mind while looking at the back of the Marquess and his wife.

Why?

# The first day of the valet!

Okay, my sore eyes should have healed by now.

I've stumbled on some difficulties on this chapter but I think my comprehension of the language is improving.

I'll retry translating Hyakuma no Shu but if I still fail to update this month, though I don't really want to do this, I will have to drop it instead of keeping you waiting for long.

Note: To those who want to edit the old chapters if not, the whole series drop me a mail, you can just do it casually if you want. I don't really like burdening someone with a job if I don't pay them for it anyway.

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 4 :**
***"The first day of the Valet"***

Full-time valet of Vincent, the eldest son of the Marquess House Windhill.

That was the job given to me.

As for the reason why things turned out this way, no matter how much I thought about it I couldn't come up with an explanation.

It couldn't be helped, I had to ask the guy whom I hated listening to the most.

「Erm…」

「What? Is there something you didn't understand?」

As opposed to his temperament from a while ago, the man attended me in a gentle manner. Which meant that just being able to let go of his job as Vincent's valet made him absolutely delighted.

「Just how did things turn out this way? The purpose of the conversation back then was to expel me out of this household, was it not?」

「Oh, that? Just focus on the matters of your job! I want to finish handing it over to you quickly.」

「Erm… Well, I can't help but wonder.」

「I guess there's no other choice. At first, it was indeed like that. There is no way we can trust anyone from the slums after all. When one becomes indebted to such people, they think of the person as nothing but a source of income.」

「Well, even though I come from there myself, I agree that there really is nothing but that sort of people back in the slum. 」

「Although the demands are usually insignificant, this is a Marquess household, we must not appear weak. So when they insist on coming back, we have to get rid of them. And if we expect things to lead in that direction, the best course of action is disposing of the problem from the beginning. That's how it is.」

Though this guy just smoothly talked about it, what he described was a murder.

I thought of asking if it wouldn't cause a problem, but I figured that it wasn't something I should inquire about. So I stopped myself from voicing the question.

「How did it develop from there into me being young master's Valet?」

「The truth is, disposing of you has already ceased to be an option ever since you've stepped into Ariel-sama's room. The lord and his wife are much more lenient to her compared to Vincent-sama.」

In other words, they were doting parents.

I wasn't really trying to make fun of them by thinking that. For someone like me, who lost his parents, it was something to be jealous about.

「If that's the case, why the interrogation earlier?」

「I was opposed to it. Just being Vincent-sama's valet has proven to be difficult, I didn't think I could deal with an orphan from the slums on top of that. 」

How dared he say that face-to-face with the person involved. As I thought, there was something wrong with this man as a human being. My impression was definitely correct.

「Pardon me for being impolite, but do you have such authority in your role?」

「A full-time valet is a butler to be and can even become one of the aides to the family head. A person having that much of a connection to Vincent-sama, their right to speak will be recognized.」

「Eh? Such a position, for me..」

「Not you. As common sense would dictate, it's impossible for someone with doubtful origins to become a close aide of the Marquess.」

This guy, there was a limit to being insensitive.

Just how did he pass being the valet of the Marquess' heir?

「… Come to think of it, what was your name?」

「Will*. Will Dirk.」

(TN: Uoru/Woru hence Whor– *cough* Walle.
EN: Or not, we don't do cute robots here
EN2: Just let's avoid picturing the little robot into this cunning man.)

「Dirk-san…」

「"Dirk-san"? Call me Will-san.」

So calling him by given name was the correct way. I should store the simple things like that in my mind carefully.

「Is calling you by "Will-san" really alright? We're going to be future working colleagues..」

「That…, Don't mind it. I hate those kinds of formalities.」

「Is that so?」

He was clearly lying, however I couldn't really press the point.

Something was fishy.

This guy would never be in such a good mood otherwise, but I should be able to find out what was up after working in this house for a while.

「Let's resume. At this rate, we will never be done with the handover process.」

To summarize the job, Valet was a person in charge of miscellaneous affairs aiming to fulfill all the desires of his master. That is what I was told but, something was not quite right.

I just couldn't imagine Will being able to fulfill all the desires of that obviously self-centered boy.

Though he called it handing over, it was actually quite different to what I imagined. All he taught me was Vincent's schedule for the month.

Other than that, it was his food preferences.

His likes and dislikes in study subjects, but he seemed to like nothing at all.

His magic specialty… it was not even worth talking about.

His attitudes to people…

Why was Will not on the list? Surely, he would've been hated by him.

Anyhow, there was nothing about the job itself.

Though I have heard worrying rumors about Vincent, Will brushed the topic off by saying he was just persistent.

Just as the Valet wanted, the handover finished in the blink of an eye and afterward the bastard immediately fled.

The ones left behind, me and Vincent, started choosing the clothes I was going to wear.

Come to think about it, I had only been wearing sleeping robes all this time. The boy prepared a couple sets of clothing for a valet, but none of them seemed to fit me.

It looked like I had an unusually small build for… Well, I didn't even know my age.

Maybe the reason why no clothes seemed to fit, was because I was yet to reach the proper age for the job. To make up for it, we tried a selection of clothes that he had grown out of.

「How about this one?」

「… I think it's too flashy for a valet.」

「Even this one? Well, you're probably right. A valet's attire must have a muted look.」

Vincent seemed to have gotten the rough idea, but this boy, fussing over how my clothes should be, was quite stubborn.

When choosing his first and foremost concern was based on the idea, that the clothes of his valet had to appear proper.

However, the boy's taste in clothing was really lame.

Though it might have been proper this world, for me it was just a bunch of clothes that I would never be able to endure wearing. No matter what I tried on, I was not able to find a thing I could agree with.

Finally, when I thought of giving up, I stumbled upon a suit in the corner of the closet larger than my room. It was different than the usual, monochromatic black, and gave out a composed feeling.

「Is this one alright?」

「Hmm?」

The boy shifted his attention to the clothes I presented. His facial expression became cloudy. It seemed he was not fond of it.

「These are clothes of a knight.」

「Clothes of a knight?」

「Knights wear clothes like those.」

「No, I get that. Does that pose a problem?」

「You're going to be a valet, not a knight.」

「…Ah, that is correct.」

This stubbornness might prove to be more difficult than I imagined. However, I couldn't just pull back when it came to this because I'd rather die than wear a frilly shirt and short pants.

「However, I am Vincent-sama's valet, so won't there be times where I will have to protect you?」

「…That is correct.」

「Someone, who protects his master, is not dissimilar to a knight. Although the occupation might differ, as far as duty goes, they are the same.」

「…Mhm.」

「That's why for person given the job of a full-time valet, wearing the attire of a knight shouldn't pose a problem.」

「…That should be fine. Very well, let's use this as your uniform.」

「Thank you.」

Persuasion successful! I immediately turned my back to the closet and changed my clothes.

Though I've heard it was clothing that knights wore, it felt just like an altered gakuran* with a higher collar and slightly longer coat. Though I had said it was monochromatic black, there was some silver embroidery on parts of it.

( *EN: For the uninitiated like me, that's Japanese male high school uniform. )

After putting it on and checking the result in the mirror, it seemed to fit me better than I expected.

That lead to the question of why was only this set of clothes like this? Was it the difference between the attire of knights and aristocrats?

While I was occupied with that thought, the boy got out of the closet and looked at me astonished.

「…Does it look strange?」

「No, it's the opposite. It suits you well.」

「I'm grateful for that. It's because this knight's garb looks good.」

「…You look like the black knight.」

「Yes?」

「Do you not know about it? It's the protagonist of the book I have read since childhood. Black hair and eyes, the clothes he wore were of the same color. He was a hero who came from another world long ago. Your clothing was made to imitate the one worn by the black knight on the illustrations in that book.」

「I see.」

I wonder if that person had been Japanese. If that was the case, I wasn't the only one in this world who came from another world. But even so, If it was really

a black-haired and black-eyed Japanese then the way he was sent to this world was different from mine.

It seemed like this was an “everything goes” kind of world.

「Do you know how to use a sword?」

「Not at all…」

「Is that so? Then you will take lessons with me.」

「Eh?」

「Do you not know my schedule?」

「No, I do. You have a fencing practice three times a week. Is it about that?」

I learned that this world had a six day week when I was being taught Vincent’s schedule. The days were tied to elements* like in Japan, but there was no equivalent to Friday, and Thursday was the day of the wind.

(TN: I’m not sure along this parts but the days of the Japanese seems to symbolize elements, for that matter Thursday would be earth and Friday would be metal or gold.

EN: The great Google says – Moon ( Monday ), Fire ( Tuesday ), Water ( Wednesday ), Wind ( Thursday, in Japan that’s Wood or Tree ), ( missing ) ( Friday, in Japan Metal or Gold ), Earth ( Saturday, in Japan Earth or Soil ), Sun ( Sunday ) )

The days were composed of Sun, Moon and the four elements. Truly easy to understand.

「You’ll participate in those fencing practices.」

「Won’t I be in the way?」

I would really be delighted to be taught the sword. However, me being able to join or not, was not within my discretion.

「It’s for the sake of protecting me properly so naturally you should work on your skills in the sword.」

This was my reasoning from earlier. Well, that was fine

「I understand. I shall do as you say.」

With this, I would be able to take fencing lessons as well, but the

swordsmanship matter was yet to be settled.

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Learning about his schedule, my impression of the boy changed.

It was quite a busy schedule after all.

Every day, he was taught academic subjects by the live-in tutor throughout the morning and magic in the early afternoon. Late afternoon was taken by fencing class half of the week and learning social skills like etiquette in the other half.

His whole day was filled with studying.

When I first saw his schedule, I thought that it should really be that busy because he was the heir of the House. However, witnessing his classes by myself, I was filled with feelings of sympathy.

「I did not understand, because your way of teaching is poor.」

「I apologize for that, but if the one I am teaching is not interested in learning, then there is nothing I can do.」

「Are you saying that I'm at fault?」

「I was merely saying that we should both work harder.」

The boy with poor grades only shifted the blame on his tutor. The tutor was pushing it right back.

His name was Harvey Moore and he was a little different from the other servants.

I learned the reason immediately.

Although he was a live-in tutor, he was capable of doing many other jobs, so the family was reluctant to fire him. This was why he could behave in a much more carefree way than the people who came from established families of servants.

Was that carefree way of speaking by him rude?

Just looking at the lesson, one would understand.

Because teaching the boy on its own was difficult.

It looked like Vincent was quite an idiot.

「I am working hard.」

「Is that really the case?」

「What?」

「If you listened to me properly, you would be able to understand what I am teaching right away. Being unable to do so only means that you haven't been paying attention.」

「…That's not true at all!」

「Sadly, that's how it is.」

「Why do you say so?」

「Because even the person sitting at the far end of the room was able to understand it.」

「What!?」

「Eh?」

This was the worst possible development here.

I wanted them to stop shifting the talk towards me.

I understood it indeed, however, not because I was listening carefully but because I was already taught the subject long ago.

「Is that true?」

「That is…」

「Not answering is the answer in itself. He does so due to his consideration of Vincent-sama.」

The tutor was driving me into a corner even more. Just what the heck was he planning?

「…Well then. Rion. Have a look at this problem.」

「Ah no, that is…」

「If you do not solve it, you'll be punished with the loss of dinner.」

Vincent took this matter seriously. This ordeal turned into a choice between being envied or not having dinner.

「I understand.」

I wasn't able to win against my appetite.

While sitting on the chair I assessed the problem presented to me. It was about the multiplication and division of fractions. As expected, I could answer this much.

I picked up the pen which was harder to use than solving the problem itself. I wasn't used to pens that needed dipping in ink every single time but I was able to write a solution even though the resulting characters were messy.

「…Have you taken arithmetic lessons before?」

「Just a little bit, from my parents.」

「But I heard you were an orphan?」

「I was taught before they died.」

「…The dwellers of slums teaching their children?」

「I would not know whether this is usual or not. I was only able to remember the things that I thought useful to get out of the slums.」

「Well that is justified. However, to think you could do mental arithmetic…」

It seems that I had really done it now. Multiplication and division of fractions are just simple problems, however, I have overdone things by solving them with mental arithmetic.

I shouldn't have done it considering the level of education of this world… No, considering my apparent age.

And Vincent's reaction was…..

「As expected of my full-time valet. Alright, you must study with me from now on. Teacher, that is fine, right?」

「Eee, of course.」

Not even tinged with jealousy, he was actually happy about it.

Was he a fool or a sage, I just didn't understand him anymore.

What I was sure of, though, was that it was too early to write him off as nothing but a selfish spoiled brat.

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After the lunch finished, it was the time for afternoon classes.

This time, it was fencing. The one teaching us was the captain of the Marquess' knight squad in the capital, Eric Marvin. Because my position was also one of the students and Vincent was stubborn about it, he told me to call Eric "shishou*" instead of "knight captain".

(TN: Most of you should have known this by now but for those who don't, it's like a fusion of the word master and teacher, I think?)

Since this was fencing, as expected it would not result in the same thing as what happened to arithmetic.

I have practiced neither fencing nor kendo and it was already decided what a complete beginner like me should do at first.

Practice swings, nothing but practice swings.

Marvin-shishou, who was at the boy's side, looked at Vincent who was wholeheartedly swinging his sword.

It was way past the thing called practice swinging.

The footwork, the movement of his ankles and knees, the adjustment of his center of gravity by moving his hip and lower back, the smooth swings of his arms in the space of one breath without defiance.

I was told to do the same thing but, I couldn't understand what was happening let alone execute the action. The shishou's explanation was that the correct way to swing a sword required the use of not just your arms but your whole body.

Keeping that in mind, I practiced swinging while being conscious of my body movements.

I kept on earnestly doing that the entire time. Or so I'd like to say, but me back then still couldn't keep it up.

When I ran out of breath, I wasn't able to lift my arms any longer. I understood the limits of my stamina with this fencing lesson. I needed to create time for myself to train my endurance.

Like this, I was able to formulate my own schedule little by little.

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After the fencing lesson, it was time for an afternoon nap.

Of course, that was Vincent's schedule, someone like me would not be granted rest.

Having said that, someone like me who only recently became a full-time valet had nothing to do during his free time and, as if she anticipated that, the ojou-sama arrived.

「Rion, you are free, am I correct?」

「Yes, milady.」

「Well then, accompany me.」

「Where to?」

「My class begins now. You should study with me as well.」

「…Understood.」

Though I did not know what the subject was, learning was a good thing nonetheless. No matter how much I wanted to study in my former world, I was not able to do so. The other me had never been able to study.

Just being born poor robbed one of his prospects.

I immediately remembered that phrase.

「Mayers-sensei, I have brought Rion along with me.」

「Ohh, so that's him.」

As though she had refused before, Mayers-sensei was clearly not very happy with my arrival. Giving off a strict vibe, she seemed to be very fitting for her job

as a tutor of a noble's daughter. She really fit what I imagined her to be although it was an image that I selfishly imposed.

「Well then sensei, I am pleased to be in your care.」

「Of course, Ariel-sama. I'm pleased to be in your care as well.」

「…What's with that look?」

As I stood there stiff from surprise due to her sudden application of proper decorum, the ojou-sama looked at me with displeasure.

Now this was the Ariel I got used to.

「Ariel-sama, isn't that behavior unbecoming?」

「….Oh my, I have shown you my embarrassing side. I will be more careful from now on.」

Again, it changed to that unexpected… Politeness.

「Erm, may I know what is the subject of this class?」

「Could you not tell by looking? It is the lesson of etiquette.」

「Etiquette? Am I participating as well?」

「You are not only the valet of onii-sama but also my…my…」

It seems she decided that it would be difficult to call me a pet in front of her manners tutor.

「Anyhow, since you are now a person of this household you should learn enough manners to avoid being an embarrassment in the public.」

「…However, I am nothing but a servant…」

「Even if you are just a servant, you are surely going to be someone who will always follow onii-sama's endeavors and at times mine as well. Do you intend to become an embarrassment for us when that time comes?」

「No, milady.」

「Then you must learn proper etiquette.」

「Understood…」

It was hard to go against this girl even for someone like me with my considerably older mental age. Was it due to the dignity that the aristocrats are born with?

Vincent did not give off such a feeling, though.

「Well then, today we start with dance lessons, don't we?」

「Yes?」

「That's exactly why I called you. I require a practice partner to be paired with for the duration, you know?」

「Milady, I know nothing about dancing.」

Though I recalled dancing in my primary school, it was very different from the way it was done here.

「That is fine. After all, it is my first time as well. Well then sensei, let us begin.」

In the end, I had to accompany her on the dance floor for an hour. Luckily, it was the first dance class and the steps were pretty simple.

*Steps, to think I would be able to casually use this word.

(TN* English)

Afterward, I had to join her in manner lessons too.

Well, I figured it was alright.

However, was this really part of my job as a valet?

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After Ariel's etiquette class was over I came back to Vincent's room.

His magic lessons were next on the schedule.

This would be the only thing that I wouldn't be able to learn.

I stood in the corner of the room in order to not interrupt the boy who was focusing on grasping his mana, just as the magic tutor instructed.

Although this was a magic class, it seemed he wouldn't actually use magic in today's lesson.

According to the tutor, the most important part was to be able to grasp and control your mana properly. In order to invoke a magic, one had to be able to circulate the power properly and allocate the correct amount of it to the spell.

Mastering this mana manipulation would increase one's the precision and effectiveness of magic.

At the time Vincent was practicing that skill.

He was softly whispering the spell aria at times.

It seems the process of spellcasting was divided into three steps, the invocation of magic being the first phase and manifestation of mana dwelling inside one's body the second.

It seemed that this process didn't change regardless of what element one possessed but because its details were very reliant on one's mindscape, the outcome would arrange itself according to that mental image..

In other words, the purpose of the aria was to make mental image creation easier on the individual. With enough practice, one should be able to use spells even without chanting.

"I shall bestow magic upon thee"

This is the second time I heard that phrase.

Naturally, this would change the effectiveness of magic. For some reason, it affected the circulation of mana inside one's body.

But I felt something was wrong.

Actual circulation did not follow my mental picture.

"Blessed wind, come and heal!"

In the third phase, the elements to be used had to be established. In this case, after imbuing the mana with wind attribute it turned into a healing magic. Sensei said that would then induce the mana residing in one's body and the will of the world to act accordingly… But where exactly did the world take action?

It had no part in the chanting of the aria neither on the mana manifestation part. My former world's knowledge of fantasy genres suggested that this

explanation somehow mixed up the spirit and elemental magic.

Well, that knowledge was rather crude.

Maybe I should have read more light novels before.

The will of the world and the four attributes, if those were spirits then did they manifest when one invoked magic? I looked around relentlessly but there was no trace of them.

Maybe it really was impossible for me to use magic after all.

If that was the case I could only raise my fighting prowess through the sword. I could not remain like this forever so I began to focus on my future.

I decided not to care anymore no matter what people said. I had to properly obtain the power I need to live in this world.

I would put all my strength into training, with the same application as those fantasy protagonists.

I swore that from the bottom of my heart.

# I have gotten considerably used to my livelihood.

Okay, the start of editing might take time and we decided to just update to not keep you waiting so this is unedited. Anyway this chapter has the part that everyone is probably waiting for but the next chapter is an even more hype inducing one.
This was also a bit confusing to read in some parts which makes it even more harder to translate, rest assured I gave my out most. The next chapter will follow within 30 minutes or so as well.

**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 05 :**
***"I have gotten considerably used to my livelihood."***

It had been three months since the day I was hired by House Windhill and I got quite used to the life here.

I kept waking up before dawn and forging my body every day. Because the work day of this household was starting early and all the employees were waking up together with the sun to begin their duties, I had to get up before them to create time for myself.

I ran around the outrageously huge courtyard and trained my muscles through numerous push ups and sit ups.

I began doing this before every dawn.

After the sunrise, my job as a valet was starting but I hardly had anything to do. The only things that the former valet, Will, told me, other than routine duties, would be how to interact with other families.

It seemed that the preparations for a tea party to be held at our own mansion, including preparing invitations for the chosen guests and confirming their attendance was quite a bit of work.

Other than that, there was also the job of vetting the requests to attend and deciding who was supposed to be accepted and who should be refused. It

seemed grasping the relationship with other families, examining who would participate, coming up with a decision and comprehending their circumstances was quite a troublesome work as well.

However, at that moment those kinds of tasks had yet to come.

Vincent-sama still being a child was not the reason.

When it came to aristocratic families, I heard that it was common to drag some of their children to social occasions. In the first place, the latest age for someone to hold a ceremony of adulthood, in this world, would be sixteen and I also heard of those who reached adulthood pretty fast at the age of twelve.

It was similar to the male coming of age ceremonies that the higher echelons of the other world held in the past.

Vincent-sama was only ten years old and adulthood should still be far off, however, it seemed, that by the age of twelve he would attend school. With that in mind, it would be better to start socializing with people of the same generation in other families now.

And yet… There was not a single invitation.

Even though there should be a lot of families desiring interaction with the House of Marquess Windhill.

Why was it like that? There was no one willing to give me a precise answer. Thinking that there must have been a reason why they refused to tell me, I gave up on investigating, as I should be able to find out sooner or later anyway.

Instead of worrying about that, I would cherish the time I made for myself to the fullest. To elaborate, I was practicing how to read.

It seemed that the characters of this world differed from Japanese. After writing my name I could see them as nothing but scribble. They were called letters.

When I became aware of that problem, my future turned bleak. I expected that not being able to write would be a fatal flaw for a valet.

But luckily, somehow, I can read. My eyes would recognise what was written in front of me in Japanese. However, I still could not write and that was a huge

problem. Writing on behalf of someone belonged to the tasks that a valet would perform often and not being able to do something like that would disqualify me for the role.

I had to learn how to write the letters at all cost.

Although they were Japanese characters no matter how I looked at them, in reality, these letters should have a different shape. I thought such a thing impossible but the reason that made it occur was my peculiar existence.

**( EN: Personality switch. )**

When I took the reins of the body, the characters written were not in his language but in letters of this world. But since I could neither read nor write, I did not know what they meant. I could only recognize the shapes.

But that was enough. The other me could understand what was written. I would perceive the shape of the characters and write them. He would comprehend the meaning behind the words and in turn after learning the meaning of what was written, I would remember how to read the letters.

I commended my other self who only thought “How dare you” in return.

**( *EN: Back to Ryou ))**

The study session started to show results. The characters on the pages of the book I was using for practice were now jumbled between Nihongo and the letters of this world. The words that got replaced were the ones I’ve grown accustomed to.

Although transcribing the text was quite hard at first, I got used to it by then.

Because I was doing this every day, I got used to the quill as well. Even though my handwriting was still shabby, I thought it was slowly turning tidier.

**( *EN: Personality switch. )**

The road to becoming a full-fledged valet.

Although the goal was still very far off, I had the feeling that I was slowly making progress.

I wondered why was I striving so hard to be diligent in the job? But to tell the truth, I knew the answer. I just could not leave those two egoistic siblings.

Although those two caused me plenty of problems, other than them I had no other people that I could trust in this world.

Such a person like me was being treated normally by them. I, who was showered with contempt by my surroundings and had been on the receiving end of harassment, had been taken under their protecting wings.

I, who was nothing but an abnormality and that was not referring just to the heterochromatic pair of eyes. I was way more abnormal than that.

My body had two personalities residing in it and I was starting to feel friction between them. Little by little the distance separating the two personalities was shrinking and they were slowly merging into one. I would become me all the time* and the other guy would become me as well. We would be one and the same.

I felt like I started to become more like an adult and in turn, he felt more like a child.

The one that deduced that the merging began was the other me. I was fine with it. But even if my two personalities fused into one, I would still be far off from being normal.

Both of us understood that.

The other me seemed to have a strong resolve in this. He came from another world so, naturally, he understood that he was far from normal, huh?

However, I was different. I was an orphan from the slums, a powerless existence who could have died at any time.

Just how did I, who was a peculiar being even in that environment, turn out like this? The other me didn’t have any idea either.

Would I become someone strong? By that time, would I still be able to stay normal? If I became an existence wielding power, then I wanted to use that

strength for the sake of those two.

The other me was quite trustworthy. Saying that this body belongs to me, he always passed its reins to myself. After thinking through his past actions, I understood that even despite knowing that I should have died, he still sincerely handed the body over to what looked like an afterimage of my consciousness. It was my first time meeting such a human being.

The way we met was strange, though, because he was a part of myself after all. I was my other self as well. Anyhow, the other me was trustworthy. I needed his earnestness to suppress the lingering hate in my heart.

So that I could keep the happiness that I was holding back then.

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It was 4 o'clock. Vincent-sama should be waking up around 8am.

Originally getting him awake was the job of the maids but because it was really difficult and they didn't want to deal with it anymore, it was forced on me before I knew.

Normally, Vincent's personal maid would be in front of the room waiting for me but…

「Why is there no coffee!?」

「Erm… Sir….」

「Why did you even wake me up without making coffee that would fight off my drowsiness!?」

I could hear shouting from inside the room. It appeared that the maid tried to wake him up on her own. Though it didn't really matter for me, if they tried doing it, I would like them to do it properly.

Sighing quietly, I turned and jogged back the way I came from. Knowing why she had such a hard time I felt quite guilty about the maid but, for a bit, I decided to endure it. After all, because of her, I had to think of a method to calm the boy down.

By the time I got back, Vincent became calmer.

However, his complaints did not cease. Shouldn't he channel that persistence to more productive pursuits? With such thoughts in my mind, I entered the room.

Passing beside the bed, I opened the curtains and let the sunlight enter through the window. Since it was the room of the heir, it was facing the sun.

When I turned my head, like I expected, I saw Vincent glaring at me from the bed.

I bowed courteously.

「Good morning, Vincent-sama.」

「Yeah, good morning.」

「Today, I have prepared apple juice for breakfast.」

「…What?」

Hearing my words, his forehead wrinkled indicating he would be difficult about it. Even though I noticed, I thought I must not falter.

「I have prepared an apple juice for breakfast, sir.」

「Why is it not a coffee? It takes plenty of coffee to wake me up, obviously!」

「Yes, sir. I was instructed about that indeed.」

「Then, why not do as you are told? Are you not my personal valet?」

「The truth is, while reading a book yesterday, I discovered something.」

「Discovered?」

「It seems that drinking coffee just after one wakes up is not very healthy.」

「…As if I care about such things. Coffee is obviously the thing for me.」

Even so, it's not like he was particularly fond of coffee. He was just copying his father.

「But sir…」

「What is it now?」

「I read that from King Takemitsu's anecdote book.」

For Vincent, the only figure surpassing his own father was the third generation king of the Gran Flamm Kingdom, King Takemitsu. He was a ruler who used the country's military prowess to expand its borders and the one said to have laid down the foundation of its current state.

「…What?」

「King Takemitsu was a gentleman who looked after his own health.」

「I know that. King Takemitsu was reckless on the battlefield but during the time of peace, he was behaved almost like a coward, treasuring his health. He lived in this manner so he would be able to display his maximum strength in combat because he thought his true worth could only be shown on the battlefield.」

「Takemitsu-ousama was noted to have said that coffee is not very healthy.」

「…And the apple juice?」

「Fruits are good for the body. It seems the sweetness of a fruit can improve the ability of one's mind.」

These were not the words of King Takemitsu but since we came this far, that didn't matter.

「Is that so? Well then, the juice is fine.」

「Understood sir. I'll leave it on the top of the table so please help yourself.」

「Alright.」

Vincent rose from his bed and sat in front of the desk. He had already stopped paying heed to the maid.

With this, I should have accomplished my duty properly.

Using the topic that I prepared for making him rise from his bed for soothing his mood was such a waste, though. It was hard preparing such things to rouse Vincent-sama's interest every day.

However, I was aware that even if the situation with the maid waking him up didn't happen, he would throw a tantrum on purpose anyway.

He was doing it with the aim of making people, who were negative towards me staying in the mansion, recognize my worth.

For the sake of returning that goodwill, preparing a conversation for every morning was nothing.

「Well then sir, I will explain the schedule for today.」

「Fumu~」

Vincent, composed, nodded his head. Explaining the schedule, that didn't change for the better, would complete my work for the morning.

Attending to him while he dressed up was the job of the maid.

Until that was finished, I went to prepare for the morning class in the neighboring room by placing the textbooks, writing tools and sheets of paper on the desks.

Yesterday's homework was blank as usual. I took the pen into my hand and opened the books at the topics that are within the scope of my understanding.

Around the time I was done, Vincent's preparations were done as well and he entered the room.

「Are you done?」

「…I have been thinking of waiting until your preparations are finished.」

「The reason why I don't do my homework is so that you can study. I can do such a thing when I want to, and in fact, I am able to do it before the teacher comes.」

Saying that, he took a seat and grabbed a pen and although he was pretending to be thinking, he only copied my answers.

Doing this, made his argument from before loose persuasive power. Using me as an excuse means he couldn't think of any other means of persuasion. The "So you can study part" was probably used so that I would not think about it too much.

When we were done, as if he had estimated this, Moore-sensei arrived in the room.

That was the start of the morning study session.

Facing us, sensei checked our answers as he explained yesterday's homework assignments one by one. That was just a review and after we were done with it, we moved on to today's lesson.

Though we were using textbooks, most of the things he discussed were not written down in them. It seemed that the reason was to protect his worth as a teacher. Once I reached that conclusion I thought of stopping Vincent who was eagerly noting the teacher's words.

I didn't have any sheets of paper left, so naturally I had no choice but to focus so that sensei's words didn't pass me by in the corner of the room.

Moore-sensei only directed a question at me once. After that, he completely ignored my existence. I understood the reason from his gaze full of contempt.

There's no mistake that he considered studies to be unnecessary for an orphan valet. When he realised that I was listening carefully, he lowered his voice noticeably. Being hated to that extent might not only be due to being an orphan but also due to my pair of eyes.

Even in this mansion, the attitude of the environment in regards to me did not change. Both in the slums and here I was a subject of hate.

With the exception of those two children.

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After the morning class came lunch.

Because Vincent was going to eat lunch with his family, the assistance was left to the maids. In the meantime, I also had to have my meal.

After taking my food from the kitchen, I returned to my room.

Although there were quarters for servants to eat, I preferred to eat on my own instead because I would just be annoyed by the surrounding glares. It was fine with me because I also had to review the lessons from that morning. I didn't know what would people say if they saw me studying.

While biting on my bread, I began writing down the things discussed during the morning class on my sheets of paper. Even if those lessons passed me by or were forgotten, if I asked questions to the other me I would be answered most of the time.

Though I didn't know why, for some reason, I had a good memory.

I was fully occupied by eating and writing at the same time. After that, I re-read it all over again and tried to understand the contents. When encountering things I didn't comprehend, I noted them separately for Vincent to ask about them tomorrow.

I can study primarily due to his cooperation.

I had asked him before why was he helping me to this degree. Strangely, I was satisfied with his answer.

"There is no perfect human being. For a human being to stand above others, he must seek someone who would fill what he lacks",that was what he said.

In other words, because he was poor at studying, I had to pile up knowledge in his stead.

I thought his sentiment was correct. Unfortunately, he had too many things that he was lacking in.

At that moment I was the only person to make up for those shortcomings. Until the number of people that could help with that increased, I had to give it my all.

This afternoon was going to be both Vincent and Ariel's etiquette class. Therefore there was no need for me to tag along as a dance partner.

I was going to spend that free period training as usual at the usual place. I took the empty bowls to the kitchen and washed them, then I went to the courtyard.

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There was a fountain located in the yard. I circled around it to reach the opposite side.

There was no reason for going to this side other than drawing water. It was concealed by the shadow of the fountain and was seldom in other people's field

of view. At the very least, I couldn't recall being seen ever since I came to the mansion.

But even so, just to make sure I concentrated on my ears to search for people's presence. Although it was possible someone was hiding like me, at the very least there were no signs of people in the surroundings.

While still trying to make sure I was alone, I focused on the sensation within myself. Calming down I put my attention to my sight with particular emphasis on my right eye. Keeping at it, before long, I could faintly see something floating in the vicinity of the fountain.

It has neither color nor shape and yet I could still feel its presence.

It seemed it had also noticed that I was looking in its direction. Those things had consciousness as well and they gathered and floated towards me.

In order to not scare them, I slowly presented my right hand. The shapeless things gathered on it and started slowly to pull and absorb something out of my body.

I could feel their existence gradually getting stronger. After gathering them I conveyed my wish.

I wanted them to become a round ball, they complied. I wished that they take the form of a blade, they acted accordingly.

After that, if I asked they cut the tree branch that stretched out in front of me, the liquid-like blade flew forward and sliced the branch into pieces. Although at that time, I could only cut small and thin branches, I thought that if the things get larger I would be able to have a go at thicker ones.

This was the magic that I came to learn. It was very different from the magic that Vincent was being taught. However my intuition was telling me, or rather, it might not be my intuition but something was telling me…

…That this was the real magic.

Noticing the presence of those things was just by coincidence. Because I was addicted to bathing, I had been sneaking there after dark to stop people from noticing.

When I poured water over my head my left eye was hindered and I had to use my right eye only to see the surroundings of the fountain. I saw those things floating around but, at first, I thought it was just my imagination since after looking at them intently with both eyes, they disappeared.

However, even though I couldn't see them any longer, I could still feel their presence. Thinking that perhaps I could only see them with my right eye, I tried doing it again and they became visible. I tried to watch with my left eye and they were gone again.

They were an existence that could only be seen through blue eyes. So I immediately knew that they were water elemental spirits. I just named them spirits for my own convenience, though, as I didn't really know what they actually were. However, for certain, they possessed a will.

Having a consciousness, they also needed to eat.

Their food obviously was the mana residing in a human's body. Not needing the activation of mana or its circulation, if I let them, the spirits would absorb mana directly within my body and become mine.

Listening to my commands was their way of showing gratitude.

That was the principle behind the magic.

Knowing that, questions began popping up. Why was Vincent's tutor teaching him lies? However, I could not ask them. After all, me being able to use magic would be yet another oddity.

I still didn't have the courage to let others know about that. Although keeping the secret was rather difficult, fortunately, there was someone who could offer me advice and support in such a situation.

Knowing that the established popular belief was wrong should be kept secret for as long as possible. Letting others know should not happen before I acquired enough power to deal with consequences.

Having decided so, I felt the need to desperately polish that ability.

By then, even without closing my other eye, I could feel the presence of the water spirits by just focusing my awareness. Even in places with water other

than the fountain location, I could feel a strong response from them.

If I could start seeing them with no effort, this magic should prove useful.

I began to think I needed to create much more time for myself so I can work on my left eye.

# I can’t keep any secret from Ojou-sama!

Sorry, I could only translate two chapters, at the very least I am still lacking one for June because the schedule I have decided for myself is 1-2 chapters per week. That aside, If you have read villainess otome game novels in the past, or rather have played otome games with medieval setting, you will recognize on this part that this is clearly a world of an otome game.

We are also one chapter away from the start of the game story which would be their enrollment in the academy. I wonder if there’s a time skip or something though?

Welp that’s all, have fun:

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**Akuyaku Reijo ni Koi Wo Shite – Chapter 6:**
***“I can’t keep any secret from Ojou-sama!”***

Vincent-sama and Ariel-sama had a sibling named Erwin who was born from a different mother.

I came to know that gradually after three months in the mansion. Although I suspected that this kind of valuable information was kept confidential by default, since I was generally avoided I had to work harder to obtain it.

But to be fair, after I became aware of Erwin-sama’s existence, a lot of information regarding him was made known to me. It seemed there was no more merit in continuing to hide it from me.

As was mentioned already, Erwin-sama had a different mother than the siblings. Because their mother, Mirria-sama, was the legal wife that meant the mother of Erwin-sama was a concubine. It looked like her social standing was not very high either.

Because of that, both she and Erwin-sama lived under a cloud of shame. Even now I could tell by her appearance that Mirria-sama had an uncompromising personality. If she was not fond of someone, she would be considerably strict

towards them.

Because of that, she didn't want to live under the same roof with a concubine and her child, they had to live at a separate place within the estate.

That was also the reason why it was so hard to notice their existence. The true reason I discovered them was through visitors.

One of those was Viscount Lange Austin. His family was a powerful one even among the vassals of House Windhill.

The purpose of his visit was to try to meet with Erwin-sama of all people. This made Vincent very angry as according to him it was not only impertinent, it was akin to declaring that Vincent-sama was lacking as an heir.

I didn't understand how such an action could lead to that outcome, however since the other servants also believed it to be true, it must have really been the case. I still had much to learn.

Although his action was rude, Viscount Austin had enough power for that to be overlooked and still be granted the visit he desired in the end, despite Mirria-sama walking out in discontent.

Anyhow, that day was the first time I got to fully know about Erwin-sama's existence and was able to see him with my own eyes.

Though, like Vincent-sama, he had blonde hair and green eyes, everything else, including the body shape, was different. If you lined both of them up, the only distinct characteristic, that would indicate they are of the same blood, was their hair and eyes.

Erwin-sama was a surprisingly beautiful boy. Since he didn't resemble Ariel-sama either, he must have inherited those looks from his mother.

It must have been that way to incite Lord Marquess to lay his hands on another woman despite knowing the strict nature of his wife.

Now Erwin-sama seemed to exceed Vincent-sama not only in appearance but in other things too.

His was better in the sword, had a higher aptitude for studying, better personality, but of all the things he exceeded his half-brother in, the most

problematic one was the talent for magic.

When children of the three great Houses reached eight, they underwent a trial to discover the capacity and aptitude of their mana. It was an important ceremony for the families that were pillars of the kingdom.

The leadership of these Houses couldn't be entrusted to someone without talent in magic and to make sure that a suitable child was born, it was their duty to adopt or marry someone who excelled in it.

Anyhow, during that ceremony, Erwin-sama had displayed an outstanding talent.

Vincent-sama's results from two years prior on the other hand… Were as expected from looking at his performance in the magic study class. They were unbecoming of House Windhill heir.

This had brought complicated changes in the family politics. Vassal houses began to wonder aloud whether Erwin-sama wouldn't be a more fitting successor to the title. Most servants in the mansion, although staying quiet on the outside, seemed to agree with that sentiment.

The only people opposed to the notion at the time were the Marquess, his wife, and Ariel-sama.

Especially, the Marchioness, who turned even stricter to Erwin-sama and his mother. Because she was scary, no one dared to question the severity of their treatment.

Viscount Austin in trying to meet Erwin-sama had shown a clear intention to push for his succession.

At that time I understood why was Will so delighted to hand over his position as Vincent-sama's valet. He transferred anticipating that Erwin would be nominated as the new heir.

It seemed I was right thinking the bastard was not a decent person.

But that was fine. Those kinds of things didn't matter to me. The only question was what Vincent-sama wished for and as a valet, I would do my utmost to make it a reality.

Well, that was how it should have been but—

「Do something about it!」

「Do something, milady?」

「You are onii-sama's valet, right? Do you think it is fine to leave things as they are?」

Having answered Ariel-sama's call, I was suddenly faced with her anger.

「….Is this, perhaps, about the succession issue?」

「Do you know of any other pressing matters?」

「Milady, I have no authority to intervene.」

「But a good valet is someone to take action even knowing that!!」

I thought that personal servants couldn't really do anything about these kinds of situations but Ariel-sama was unlikely to accept that even if I said it out loud.

「Milady, when you say take action, what exactly should I do?」

「That is for you to figure out.」

「…Is eliminating the rival acceptable?」

「That is a good idea. Make it happen.」

Even though I offered a drastic solution on purpose, it was still accepted nonetheless. Ariel-sama probably didn't understand the true weight of my words.

「Erm, the person removed would be your younger brother Erwin-sama though.」

「Who else would it be?」

「Eh?」

「What is it?」

「We're talking about your younger brother milady.」

「…If he is bringing chaos to the house, then we have no other choice. That is a part of my burden as an aristocrat.」

「…」

It looked like she understood after all. It seemed she was not against disposing of her half-brother for the sake of the House. For Ariel-sama, that was one of the responsibilities that fell on a noble.

「So, can you do it?」

「… If an opportunity arises. However, I am not confident that it's possible without being found out.」

「Is that so?」

「I'm afraid that the end result would not work in Vincent-sama's favor.」

「The vassal families might take it badly too.」

「Wouldn't that also be a problem, milady?」

「It would, wouldn't it? Let's put that plan on hold. Do you have any other ideas?」

「…Yes.」

Though I expected that the conversation would be over once the assassination plan was put on hold, it seems I was wrong. This persistence really ran in the blood. It was likely that they inherited it from their mother.

「…For now, Vincent-sama is the official successor, is he not?」

「That is correct.」

「Then, wouldn't it be better if we refrained from taking drastic measures for the time being? 」

「You mean to leave everything as is!?」

「No milady, that is not what I meant. For now, it would be better to make the surroundings recognize Vincent-sama as worthy of succeeding. In order to make them realize that is the case, we need him to achieve commendable feats.」

「Such as?」

「…Such as serving with distinction during wartime. 」

「To make that happen right away would be impossible.」

「Which is why, currently, we need to work hard to improve Vincent-sama's abilities.」

「If we do that, when will it be acknowledged?」

「Milady, that…」

When it came to that kind of questioning, Ariel-sama was pretty strict. She would realize it right away if one made a half-baked response. She considered that to be one of the gravest sins in a servant's conduct and would yell at offenders.

「Don't tell me, you do not know?」

「No milady, that is not the case.」

「Well then, when?」

「I expect that the right opportunity would present itself after enrolling to the Academy, however as to what shape will it have, I'm still not quite sure.」

I answered using my knowledge of the other world but as I was not confident that the school in both worlds worked the same way, I could be vague.

「…That's right, isn't it? There is also that.」

「Am I right that there will be one?」

「That is a matter of course. There will be various exams at fixed intervals. There should also be other various opportunities to show one's abilities as well.」

「Well then, before we get to that, Vincent-sama must make a great effort.」

「Specifically on what?」

「Ehm…」

「Don't tell me you have no idea?」

How very strict. Even though I was called without prior notice I was being pressed for answers to the end. Well, giving them was a part of my job as well.

「Milady, I do not know if I can manage to have those things implemented.」

「What do you mean?」

「There is an urgent need to change Vincent-sama's tutors with the magic

teacher being the top priority. Even if I, being ignorant on the subject, was to be asked, I'd tell you that part of his lessons are very odd.」

「…If what you say is true, then that is unforgivable.」

Her anger ignited instantly. Insincerity to one's employers was one of the things that she found unforgivable. Like attempting to trick her with half-baked words.

「Milady, bear in mind that this is just an insight from someone whose knowledge of magic is non-existent.」

「Teachers should teach those who know nothing. For Rion to still know nothing means that this particular tutor is worthless at his job.」

「As I thought then, changing the tutor would be for the better but I worry that it can't just be done like that.」

「That's fine. I will take over the task.」

「Milady?」

「I will be teaching onii-sama myself. I am better than him when it comes to magic, so it should be fine.」

「….As you wish.」

Though I felt that the answer to the problem was still far off, this was not something I could object to. It would be better to avoid meddling with Ariel-sama's feelings for her brother's well-being.

「Which other tutor?」

「The sword instructor.」

「Eh? In our family, only one or two people can contest with Eric in the realm of swordsmanship.」

「Indeed. Requesting him to be changed might seem impertinent when he's so talented.」

「Then, why is there a need to replace him?」

「Because he doesn't understand the struggles of someone without a shred of talent.」

「…That is」

「It might be unkind to say, but I think Vincent-sama doesn't have any talent for fencing. However, I don't think that lacking it is an absolute obstacle.」

「…Talent is… No, continue. You're still to explain in full, am I correct?」

「Yes. If he was compared to Erwin-sama his shortcomings would be obvious. If even I, observing from the sidelines can tell this, then Vincent-sama most likely thinks so as well.」

「…What did you say?」

I provoked her again. I decided to give up on avoiding that at the moment. For Vincent-sama's circumstances to see actual change, all his problems including mental ones should be addressed, even if criticism was required.

「The person teaching Vincent-sama should be more honest. How should I put it… That person must have the gentleness that could coax out skill from within another person.」

「…That's right, I guess? What's next?」

「In regards to the academic subjects….., Vincent-sama's motivation poses a problem.」

「…That's the most difficult part, isn't it?」

「Yes milady…. I am planning to figure out remedies for that.」

So even Ariel-sama was aware of that, huh? It was hard to think of any methods to change Vincent-sama's hate for studying.

「In regards to that, I shall think of a way as well. For the time being, I will participate in your plan too.」

「Milady?」

「I said, I will study alongside Onii-sama for now.」

「…Understood.」

Other than presenting options to solve Vincent-sama's problem, I didn't have any more say in the matter. Though even if I had, I wouldn't.

Several days later, I was reminded just who the most influential person in this mansion was.

◇◇◇

The morning study session. Beside Vincent-sama, Ariel-sama also took the tutor's class.

「Onii-sama, how do you plan to explain this?」

「Nn? This is… Rion, explain it in an easily understandable way.」

「Milord?」

「I'm afraid my explanations would be too hard for Ariel to take in, but you should be able to frame it in a more understandable way.」

「I should?…」

「That's fine. Then let us hear it from Rion himself.」

Moore-sensei turned his head towards us but Ariel-sama agreed while ignoring him completely. I was left with no choice but to comply. If I made mistakes on some parts, I would just ask for forgiveness.

「Alright. In order for one to obtain a profit, the selling price of a good must be higher than its cost.」

「That is obvious.」

「Then what determines whether the product's selling price is expensive or not?」

「…That would be the selling price.」

「Then is a bread being sold for two copper coins expensive or cheap?」

「That is cheap, isn't it?」

「…Ehmm.. It's actually expensive.」

「Eh? I have yet to see one but copper would be one of those cheap coins, wouldn't it?」

Rather, you never even handled money, right? By the way, although Vincent-sama had visited shops himself, he had never been informed of things like

“prices”. Honestly, I didn’t even know how many times I was tempted to pocket the outlay for myself.

「….Erm, you see, for me, two pieces of copper coin for a loaf of bread would be too expensive.」

「Rion, are your wages that low?」

「… No, I have nothing to spend money on so what I earn is plenty for now… Umm, let me rephrase it. When I was still residing in the slums, two coppers would be unobtainable and was a great deal of money.」

「Is that so…?」

The expression of Ariel-sama became clouded. She was really honest when it came to things like this. However, at that moment it wouldn’t do.

「Milady, there is no need for sympathy. I only said it for the sake of explanation.」

「That is right, isn’t it?」

「However, Ariel-sama said that it was cheap. Now then, is the loaf cheap or expensive?」

「…Ohh?」

**(*TN: The usual ojou-sama “Ara?” that brings music to my ears. What? Nothing! I just really want to say it.)**

「This is why what determines if something is expensive is the buyer and not the price. Let’s return to our example. Two coppers for a loaf of bread would be expensive, however, if there were people willing to buy it for three coppers later, if you bought one and then sell it to them, you would obtain profit.」

「That’s right.」

「This is called determining the value of goods by demand.」

「So the prices will be decided according to the buyer’s side, right?」

「If one were to put it simply, yes.」

「Well then, explain it easily.」

「….Yes. Next concept would be determining the value of a product through supply. Let's assume you decided to sell bread for three coppers per loaf, if there are no willing buyers then it won't sell. Do you know why?」

「Eh? There is a reason for this?」

「There is. If the product it is not a necessity, then it will not be bought. The potential buyers would likely be able to get a hold of it for a cheaper price or even make it themselves.」

「…Indeed」

「So, if people do not have a way to get a loaf of bread for two coppers nor the means to make it at home, what would happen then?」

「Well, we will be able to sell ours for three coppers.」

「Yes. It might even be possible to sell it for four coppers. If we refused to sell and they had no other means to get it, then even if the price was raised higher, it might still find buyers. This is how the prices are determined by the supply.」

「However, that would be despicable.」

「The main goal of merchants is profit.」

「But even so…」

「Don't worry, milady. There's more to the subject. A merchant that takes advantage of others by racking up prices loses credibility. Even if he gains profit in the moment, he will lose much more in the long term. It would eventually wipe out all his profits and more.」

Adding this part was not strictly necessary. However, because Ariel-sama wouldn't be able to accept such a ruthless way of gaining profits, if such a caveat was not added, then she would not let the subject drop.

「…That's right, isn't it? With this, it would be acceptable.」

「That sums up the topic, was the explanation clear?」

「Yes. It was.」

Though I did not think that they were able to fully understand the issues with my explanation, for Ariel-sama it was alright. This kind of knowledge is not

necessary for her after all. I wished Vincent-sama took it in properly, though.

He was looking at his textbook with a rather displeased expression.

「…Is that so. So that's how it is.」

「Eh?」

「Ah, no, yes, that was a splendid explanation. It was even understandable for Ariel, was it not?」

「Yes, onii-sama.」

Though I was also surprised that he was able to understand my explanation, this must have been what Ariel-sama was really aiming for, having us study together, to have me explain things.

Perhaps even more surprising than this was the notion that struck me suddenly, was Ariel-sama always so outrageously bright?

If that was the case, then I didn't have an eye for people but I should not feel sorry for myself.

The surprises about Ariel-sama didn't end with just that.

When it came to magic, she was unmistakably a genius.

The attribute of Ariel-sama's magic was obviously wind. After seeing the spirits, that were supposed to be invisible to me, spread all around her and shine, it was painfully obvious.

And leaving her affinity aside and just judging by the number of spirits gathering in her surroundings, I wondered just how much mana they received from her?

What amazed me was that she was able to keep such a state stable.

「Do you understand, onii-sama? It is done by feeling the mana in your surroundings, not by feeling the mana inside your body.」

「…That is what you said but…」

「Can you see the mana flowing around me?」

「Y-Yeah. That is amazing, Ari.」

Ariel-sama's enthusiastic approach to teaching seemed to be having a counterproductive effect, though. Clearly, Vincent-sama was just being oppressed by the reality of how inferior his talent was.

「Onii-sama should be able to do a thing like this. Your way of doing it until now was just wrong.」

「But…」

「The mana circulating around me is a thing that also exists elsewhere, please try to feel it.」

「The same exists… I can't see them.」

「There is no way that's the case. They should be visible to onii-sama as well.」

Maybe this way of teaching was because she was a genius. Since she was able to do it easily, she did not know the right way of explaining to others how they can do it themselves.

「…Milord, Please focus your consciousness on your eyes.」

「Eh?」

「Ah, the conversation was about seeing, so I thought focusing on eyes would be important.」

「…That is indeed correct.」

「Accordingly, if what you were trying to see was wind attribute, I think having a proper mental image of the wind could also help. Should I open the window to let some fresh air enter?」

「…Is it that simple?」

「It was just a suggestion from an outsider, please excuse the boldness.」

「…Just do the things you were thinking of doing.」

「Well then, I shall open the window.」

I walked towards the window and opened it. The breeze that entered from the outside felt pleasant. Would he be able to see them after feeling this?

Vincent-sama turned his gaze towards the window. So he was truly obedient

when it came to being taught by his sister. Though I could show him the method I figured out for myself because we have different attributes, it might not have been of much help.

Also, I knew that it wouldn't be enough just with this.

「…Ariel-sama.」

「What is it?」

「Please, withdraw your mana for a moment. If they gather too much on you, there won't be much left for Vincent-sama to see.」

「You…」

The color of her face changed and I immediately knew that I made a blunder.

「You can see them, don't you!?」

「I CAN SEE THEM!!」

「「Eh?」」

「I can see them. O-oh! What is this? They are getting closer.」

「That is it. That's the mana that exists in the environment. Stay as you are and this time, hold out your hands and focus the mana in your body towards them.」

「It's the circulation for activation of magic.」

Vincent-sama like the usual, focused and began chanting. I started to see a faint light forming on his palm. It was probably the spirits showing joy after obtaining their food.

「What's after this?」

「If you continue the chant to the end, the magic should activate.」

「So what's the difference from the usual method?」

「 That aside, I'm surprised you were able to use magic despite not knowing the source. The source of the magic was the mana gathering in onii-sama's palm, didn't onii-sama know?」

「Then what about the mana inside my body?」

「Isn't it for the sake of attracting them?」

「Is that really the case?」

「That is right, The larger the spell you want to use, the more mana it will gather. That's how the efficiency changes.」

「Is that so?」

Finally being made aware of these things, Vincent-sama's magical ability was sure to rise. As Ariel-sama said, I was also way more surprised by the fact that he was able to use magic somehow.

Anyhow, it was amazing. I felt like his potential skyrocketed instantly thanks to his sister.

However, that Ariel-sama was looking in my direction with a severe glare.

「…Milady?」

「Rion, you can use magic, can you not!?」

「…No, I can't.」

「You lie! How come you can see my mana in that case!?」

「That's because…」

It seemed the spirits were not a thing that could be seen by just anyone. I made a blunder due to ignorance even though I was being so careful…

「So you can now lie to me?」

「Ah, no..」

「**You lied, didn't you**?」

「Milady, my deepest apologies.」

「What attributes can you use?」

「…Water only.」

「**What attributes can you use?**」

「…And just a little bit of fire too.」

「EEH!?」

The one who yelled in surprise was Vincent-sama. Ariel-sama looked like she

was satisfied with my answer. The reason why she was persistent was probably because she deduced this far already.

「…Who else knows about this?」

「Only the two of you.」

「Well then, keep it that way. Do not tell anybody.」

「Yes milady.」

「Even you, onii-sama.」

「Understood.」

My only secret was immediately found out by the two of them. Though I worried about what that could lead into, I felt relieved at the same time.

I didn’t want to hide secrets. However, the other me, as expected, didn’t want it to be exposed, even if people would not believe it anyway.

But even so, the time for it to be revealed would still come either way. I decided to believe in that and wait for that moment as well. After all, my life here had just begun.

# I have matured a bit– no a lot.

Okay, this is the first edited and proofread chapter and the past chapters should follow up as well after this one. Prologue arc ends and the next arc is academy arc which is probably the start of the otome game story line.

Enjoy.

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Chapter 7: ***I have grown up a little– no, a lot.***

The room was still dark. But even not having a watch, I knew that it was about the time for people to wake up. But before that, I had to get rid of hindrances.

「… It's already morning. Please wake up.」

「…N…」

「It's morning.」

「…Already? Isn't it still dark?」

With her body jolting, the woman sleeping beside me had finally woken up.

「Wouldn't it be bad if everyone else woke up before you? 」

「That's right, isn't it? Thank you for waking me up.」

The woman rose from the bed while still rubbing her sleepy-looking eyes. I could only see that stark naked appearance of her as nothing, but vile.

Although the outward looks of the servants in the mansion were good, being a factor in the selection, for me, things like appearances didn't mean a thing.

A woman who sneaked into the room of an adolescent boy was nothing, but foul.

「You really…. Even though you're just a kid, you're quite good. I will accompany you again.」

She said with a smile floating on her face. Although she acted as if she was the one doing a favor, the words she said didn't make me happy at all. However, if

needed, I would still accompany her. But, it was time to make her realize that the one having pleasure, was only her.

「Yes. However, Ariel-sama won't let this kind of thing off the hook.」

「…Eh?」

The color of her face immediately changed. No matter how many times I saw it, this part was really amusing. No matter which woman, their response was the same sort of stupid expression.

「Because Ariel-sama is fastidious, she is strict in these kinds of things.」

「You are planning to talk about it!?」

「If I hide it, it will make things more complicated.」

「…That's a joke, isn't it?」

「I am being serious. I can never hide anything from neither Vincent-sama nor Ariel-sama.」

Except for one thing.

「…You really are lying, aren't you? You're only doing this to shake me up.」

「No, It's the truth.」

「…Please don't, if you do such a thing then I…」

Finally, the behavior of the person changed into a pleading one.

Anyone scowled at by Ariel-sama had no place in this mansion. Just one word from Ariel-sama conveyed to the Lord Marquess meant that being fired would be as good as certain. If you were going to tremble like this, then you shouldn't have done such a stupid thing in the first place.

「Even you won't be let off the hook, you know?」

「That's right, isn't it? It will probably be the same whipping as the usual. However, my sin only weighs as much as that.」

「Please… I'm begging you, please don't tell them. I will do anything, I will also let you sleep with me from now on.」

It seemed this woman still didn't fully comprehend her position.

I needed to make it clear for her.

「Let me sleep with you?」

「Eh?」

「Shouldn't it be something like "I'm begging you, please sleep with me!"?」

「Rion?」

「Or should we make it "You can do to me as you please" instead?」

「You…」

「One should be aware of his own situation. Do you know what that means?」

「…You have set me up, haven't you?」

「No way. I haven't really done anything. Haven't you been the one to come to my room at your own convenience? Who haven't cared to listen to what I was saying and then threatened and forced yourself on me?」

「That's right, but…」

「You have been thinking that someone like me would just do as told, right?」

「That is…」

In the those last two years, my situation had always been the same. It was not related to how old I was, but rather as long as my appearance didn't change, I would always be hated and at the same time treated as a plaything.

Although I did not even know my exact age, I who was still clearly in the period of childhood, had already been involved with numerous women. Females coming to my room, with their sights on my above average face, were not limited to just one or two.

Thanks to this, my situation has worsened to the point that my distrust of women was pushing up ahead of my distrust of humanity as a whole.

「If you ask me to not inform them, then I could stay silent about it. However, because that would be a serious thing to do and a grave betrayal of Ariel-sama, the price for doing that will not be small.」

「…Then the compensation is?」

「Nothing much. Tell me about the people you get acquainted with during your work, that alone will be enough. We can even keep sleeping with each other at like yesterday.」

「…Is that really enough?」

「Yes. I would not dare to inconvenience a lady. However, you are not the only girl I'm meeting with right now. It would be troublesome if, in the future, you visited at the same time as one of the others. 」

「…You are quite the lady killer, eh? Even though you're still a kid, you can make a woman's heart go mad all the same. Your relationships, your responsibility however*.」

Because the demand was too light, it seems her composure had returned. Her attitude changed to flattery. Well, I guess this much is fine for today. I can still think of many ways to threaten her anyway.

「I think it would be best for you to return now.」

「That's right, isn't it? …When will the next time be?」

「I will contact you. It's to make sure no one else notices of course.」

「…I understand. Well then, I will wait for the invitation.」

Although she had a rather unsatisfied expression, the woman said nothing more and, after putting on her clothes, left the room. When her footsteps became distant, I have also exited into the hallway.

It was already the time for my training.

With this, I had five people. I finally managed to seize the woman who was assigned to the most important tasks.

If you did not have the absolute support of the Lord and his wife in the succession conflict, it would put you at a great disadvantage. However, that moment was the turning point.

From then on, I would not let any information regarding the mansion's situation escape from my grasp. "One who seizes the information, seizes the battlefield" –

I don’t know who did that quote come from, but it was from the other world.

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Before my training began, I plunged myself completely into the fountain’s water.

That was because I wanted to wash the lingering scent of the woman clear off. Just being wrapped around by that scent already gave me an unpleasant feeling.

I poured water on the top of my head over and over again. Though the current season was unpleasantly cold, that didn’t matter to me at all. No matter how freezing the water was, it would feel mild to me.

「…Has someone slept with you again?」

My hands pouring water instantly stopped as I heard the voice, that I currently didn’t want to hear the most. Timidly turning my head, the person, who should never have appeared in such a place, was currently standing there.

It was Ariel-sama.

「…Good morning milady. This is because I have woken up early.」

「Rather, you haven’t been able to sleep, right? Due to someone’s fault.」

「…Milady? That would be?」

I was having a bad feeling. I was really having a bad feeling, that it was probably about that.

「I have came to Rion’s room, because there has been something I’ve been really curious about.」

「…I haven’t noticed milady.」

「Of course you haven’t. You have been in something like a trance after all.」

That was not me, but the other one… I should’ve have thought about making less sound.

「Milady? I wonder what would that have been caused by?」

「Are you trying to make me say it?」

「…Of course not, milady. But I think that coming to my room alone in the middle of the night would not be a conduct becoming an aristocrat's daughter.」

「…I know about that.」

The face of Ariel-sama turned even more displeased. Just looking at such an expression, brought pain to my chest. However, I still had to inform her about my perspective, because Ariel-sama was important.

「The current situation is not desirable to me either. So if possible milady, do lift your spirits a little bit…」

It seems with this, her patience had finally snapped. Ariel-sama's whip flew towards my hands. Her lash today hurt an awful lot.

Did she fail to control it, or was it on purpose? No, no matter how I thought about it, it was on purpose. There was no one to witness the whipping, so there was no need to whip me seriously.

Our relationship was of the kind where, when we would look to be too close, odd suspicions would arise. The purpose of the whip was to prevent such risk and it was showcased to the surroundings to put an emphasis on the master-servant status.

Ariel-sama was really good at whipping. Even though it was making a really loud sound, there was almost no pain. When I praised her for that, I was told that it was only due to her use of wind magic. Magic was really convenient in various ways.

However, the whipping today was done without restraint.

「…Your orders milady?」

「Do I really need to have a business in order to meet with Rion?」

「….That is not the case at all.」

「In the near future Rion will attend the academy as well, correct? After that, there won't be much time when we're together.」

「Yes milady.」

The following spring, I would start to attend the Royal Academy together with

Vincent-sama. I was merely tagging as a valet in order to take care of his daily necessities. But even so, the academy had a huge library and there were a lot of books that didn't exist in this household. The studying environment didn't matter for a valet, however the library was a great place to learn.

The real problem was that the academy employed a boarding system.

Although it was under the pretext of making the younger nobles more independent, since it was merely for form's sake, it didn't mean a thing. This is because all lordlings and little ladies were accompanied by a person taking care of their necessities similar to me.

Knowing that this was the case, I thought it would be better if there was no dormitory system at all, but surely there were circumstances dictating otherwise. I had gotten used to the noble society having inexplicable circumstances.

Anyhow, the time where I could be with Ariel-sama would be limited to my days off. When it came to that… not sparing a thought for such things was no good.

「It's only natural that I want to spend the same amount of time together, or even just a little more.」

「Ariel-sama, I appreciate the thought, but causing situations where you have to sneak out to meet me…」

「What's wrong with that!?」

「…Milady is engaged to the Crown Prince. You must not endanger that, no matter how trivial the reasons, nor offer opportunities for other to slander you.」

「…」

The engagement of Ariel-sama and the Crown Prince was formally announced a year ago, but the marriage itself was all but decided even further back.

I had Vincent-sama tell me about the circumstances regarding that.

The relationship between the royal family and the three aristocratic families was complex. One of them being ahead of the other two was neither desirable to

the royal family nor the three houses themselves. Each of them would prefer it was their own family who would gain the upper hand instead.

However, such a thing would not be achieved easily. If one of the three started getting ahead, the other two would suppress it back. It was that kind of situation.

Because of that arranging marriages was difficult. Having only one of the three aristocratic families deepen their relationship with the royal family was not desirable. Deepening relationships with the other branches of nobility was not desirable as well because no dynasty wanted another to become equal with their own standings.

Well then, how would all that actually work?

Simply by making the three aristocratic families to take turns.

The wife of the current king was from the House Aqusmea and the queen of the next generation was already decided to come from House Windhill.

Ariel-sama was already determined to be the queen ever since she was born.

Because she herself knew this for ages, she had always done her best to become someone worthy of being the next queen. In addition, it seems the crown prince was also smart, good looking, had excelled for both swordsmanship and magic and was a person of impeccable character.

It would be only natural to be glad about it.

Though it should have been natural, probably because it was an arranged marriage, for some reason Ariel-sama didn't feel glad about it. It might have also been due to the pressure of being the official queen of the next generation. After all, it was a Queen's crown. For a commoner like me, it was an existence way above the clouds.

「Until when do you plan to continue such activities?」

「Yes milady? What would you be referring to?」

「…those women.」

「Although I won't increase the number any more, I must still accompany them at times.」

「…The woman this time was who, and where is she from?」

「It is a person in charge of distant matters.」

I stopped the answer with just the where part. I have already learned from experience that if I told her who, she would treat them in an unfavourable manner after all.

Though I knew that it was an improper relationship, this was all for the sake of Vincent-sama. I also wanted to ask her to consider her actions more, but I could not get it out of my mouth. Especially because Ariel-sama didn't hide her discomfort in regards to this matter.

Which reminded me of the time when Vincent-sama was persistent in a similar case and I told him, which resulted in me and the woman being whipped together.

「What are you laughing at?」

「……Nothing, milady.」

It seems I couldn't help but laugh unconsciously, just remembering about it.

「I have heard that you will take a day off.」

「…Is that perhaps what milady has been concerned about?」

「Yes. After all, even if you take a day off, you have no other place to go.」

「Even I would want to go out to play at times.」

「That's a lie.」

Ariel-sama flat-out rejected my words. Was she sharp, or what.

「Tell me your real reason. This is an order.」

She used it as if flashing her hidden trump card. Well it was actually effective on me though. I didn't want to hide anything from them. Or rather, I didn't want to add anything more to the most important thing I was hiding then.

「…It's only a bit of cleaning up.」

「Cleaning up?」

「When I go to the Royal Academy, there might be times when those whom I have gotten acquainted with will come for me. Although the chance of it happening is low, I have been thinking that I should remove the potential sources of future trouble.」

「….You are going to the slums, right?」

「Yes milady.」

「What are you going to do there?」

「…A bit of cleaning up, milady.」

「….It's nothing dangerous, is it?」

「Because it's the slums, I won't lie about the dangers involved. However, I will return safely without fail.」

I promised my safe return to the straightforward pair of Ariel-sama's eyes. The pair of emerald green irises were staring at me and I felt like being pulled inside.

「…I understand. Be careful.」

「Yes milady.」

I bowed deeply towards her departing back.

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It had been roughly two years since I came to the mansion. I shopped a bit to kill time and after finishing a light meal, I headed towards my objective.

Passing through numerous alleys away from the main street, I moved towards the place where I was raised.

The dark side of the capital, the slums.

Even though so much time had already passed, the state of the neighbourhood hardly changed. Walking in the manner that I had gotten used to, I entered deeper into the alleyways, while avoiding getting dirty.

Although I could feel the stares surrounding me, I knew that it wasn't because

people recognized me. Looking at a well-dressed kid, they must have thought that a prey had strayed into this place again. Ignoring the watchers, I went straight towards the place where those bastards should be nesting.

It was a considerably better looking building compared to the average structure of the slum area. They should be gathering on the first floor.

Before, I would never have made myself approach this place and because I was currently about to enter it now, I must have gotten really strong.

As I opened the door, I could hear the voices of the adults making a racket inside. After that, there was a small pause. Seeing my figure enter the building, they have turned silent.

Looking around the surroundings, I immediately found my target.

「…You bastard, how dare you show yourself in here!?」

The guy who exploded in anger approached me. There was another person following him, those two were together as usual.

But then again, years ago, there were three and not actually two.

「It's Dan's killer! I'll butcher him to death!」

Skipping the talking really helped.

The two brandished a pair of blades to threaten me. Though it was quite unsatisfactory, I guess this had to do.

Reaching towards my waist, I drew my sword and everything happened in a flash. Blood suddenly gushed out from the throat of the man in front of me.

「Wha?!」

With no time to be surprised, I faced the other man and swung my sword diagonally downwards. With barely a response, the body of the man immediately fell to the floor.

「…You! What are you trying to pull!?」

Finally realizing what was happening, the other men simultaneously stood up.

「I killed them, because they were trying to kill me.」

「What?!」

「Complaining about this… It seems that the slum denizens have turned quite naive.」

Kill if you didn't want to be killed. That should have been a common rule here.

「Even so, what are you trying to pull causing an uproar in here of all places.」

I started hearing a deep voice from above the stairs.

「Leader!」

Well, it was really reassuring that talks progressed this fast. If it was like this, I would be done in no time.

「I have been wondering what's with the uproar. To think it has been you.」

「Do you remember me?」

「Of course I do remember. I can even remember your taste.」

「I remember clearly as well.」

「Is that so? So you came because you couldn't forget? Then I'll do you again as you wish, so bare you ass.」

「Like hell that's the case.」

「Haa, to think that you, who could only quiver in fear before, have become someone to speak so boldly.」

「I have grown quite a bit after all.」

「So? What do you want?」

「I have told you haven't I? That I can clearly remember everything.」

「Don't tell me you have come here to kill me? Me of all people? Just where the hell do you think you are?」

「This place? It's your graveyard. Burneth thee, till not a speck of ash remains – Flame Prison!」

Almost immediately after my words, the body of the man was engulfed in flames.

Not a single fragment of his earlier bravado could be seen now while he rolled his body on the floor screaming.

Doing that would not extinguish the flames. They would only disappear after one was already burned to dust.

「Well then, I wonder who's next?」

「….Y-you, U-using magic.」

「So it is you?」

「N-No! I haven't done anything to you!」

「You not doing anything is a lie. I can remember you kicking me sometime in the past.」

「….I-I apologize. Please forgive me.」

「Hmm…. Flame Prison!」

「Guaaaaaaaaah!」

Assaulting me from the back was futile. The me right then could easily feel the presences behind my back. Still, it was just the right time to show an example. With this, the talk between us should progress faster.

「If you defy me, I'll kill you. Then what should you be doing?」

「…Do as we are told.」

「That's right. Please do. Well then, not wasting time, here are your orders.」

「W-What?」

「Gain complete control of the slums. Exterminate the other influences and subdue all of this region.」

「…That is.」

It seems the guy in front of me didn't completely understand what I was saying. Ah no, he could understand but couldn't see how to make this happen.

「I won't ask you to make it happen immediately. It's fine if it takes you some time.」

「Even if that's the case, there's no way we can simply…」

「I will get rid of the obstacles. If it's someone who will bow down to money, give them money. However you get there, have all those who reside in the slum area vow allegiance to you.」

「That is really unlike you, Flay.」

So my name was actually Flay. Well, even hearing that, not a single memory resurfaced and I didn't feel a thing. As I thought, the me, who carried the memories of this world, was nothing but an afterimage of a consciousness.

「In regards to this organization – I will seldom come here. As for other things – you can do to as you like to uncooperative inhabitants, after all, you guys will be the group ruling this town.」

「…Really?」

Although I was trying to do it by carrot and stick approach, I wondered if it went well. Anyhow, I felt like the faces of the surrounding men have now been tinged with excitement.

「Yeah. I will provide you with necessary funds. Is there someone in charge of finances here?」

「He should be on the second floor.」

「Call him down.」

「U-Understood.」

After waiting for a while, a diligent-looking person, seemingly unfit for this place, was forcibly dragged out. Because he was someone who could calculate, it seems there also were educated people in here.

「Your name?」

「….Mane.」

「An alias. Well that's fine. Use this money as you see fit. However, you must record all of your transactions. If I find any falsehoods, I'll turn you into charcoal too.」

「….Y-Yes.」

Rather than minding my threat, the surrounding people were surprised by the

money that I handed over to Mane. Well that was certain to happen. This was an amount of money that commoners wouldn't even be able to fathom. If I told them that that was only a portion of Vincent-sama's pocket money, would they be convinced? After all, he was not an heir of the Marquess for nothing. Though I wouldn't reveal such a thing to them even if it killed me.

「Although I said that you can do as you please, things that go against my orders are unforgivable. I will come here periodically to check the situation. If, when I arrive here, there's no significant progress, I'll have you all dead. If someone tries to escape, I'll chase him until the end of the world and kill them. Not just that, I will have all those left behind take responsibility and kill them too.」

「No way!?」

「Give it up. You have been captured by the worst of all humans. But if things go well, you will be able to live an enjoyable life. Believe it.」

「….Understood.」

「Don't tell anyone about me unless I permit it, even if someone comes to ask. If you stumble upon me, don't talk to me first, conversation will only begin when I come to talk to you.」

「Understood.」

「Any questions?」

「…None.」

「Well then, I will look forward to results of your great efforts. Wouldn't it be good if this place turned into a decent town?」

With this, the cleanup was over. Although I didn't know if my attempt to put things in order would go well. And even if it did, I didn't know if it would be of any use to me in the future.

But that was fine. I would think of what I could do about it when everything was finished.

"Those who are well-prepared will worry for nothing" – or so they said.

# Event : The season of encounters

Okay, new update. Sorry it took quite long. Although I can't really promise, I'll try updating 2 chapters next week.

Anyway, here it goes.

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi Wo Shite – Chapter 8 –**
***"Event : The season of encounters"***

Spring season. Although this was the most hectic and important period for the teachers of the Royal Academy, the newly admitted students had resurfacing thoughts of everything feeling anew —— At least that's how it was supposed to be every year.

Particularly this year, in the faculty room, the teachers put in charge of first years were focusing their grave expressions on the faculty leader.

「How did the things end up like this?」

「What are you saying now, you should've expected this outcome all along, shouldn't you?」

Although the faculty leader was scolding the grumbling homeroom teacher, in reality he himself felt like complaining too.

「I know that, but I still can't help complaining!」

「I feel the same.」

「However, to be in charge of those "first years" that only arrive once in decades…」

「Haa…」

Although it was already obvious, the thing making the teachers rack their brains was the issue of the first years.

This year's roster of incoming students has been completed. It looked like the period of suffering that was said to only come once every several decades was

approaching with the outstanding lineup.

The first person of the list would be the crown prince himself, his highness Arnold Highland. In other words, the future king. In addition, there also were the younglings of the marquesses.

The heir of House Aqusmea , viscount Lancelot Minister.

The second daughter of House Fatillas , Charlotte Lanchester.

Finally, the heir of the House Windhill , viscount Vincent Woodville.

The gathering of the three marquess houses. Together with the crown prince, it was the splendor of the three heirs. The gathering of the children of the most influential people had happened in the past as well.

“If the other Houses get married, then even our House would!” “If news got out about a pregnancy in the other House, then all the more our House would make one happen as well!” such small rivalries had tended to happen naturally.

This usually resulted, with the younglings being close in age, in the so called period of suffering that only arrived once per decades and which the teachers feared the most.

With all that said, all of them being concentrated in one year was not really that rare.

Although the Royal Academy welcomed the influential younglings with much delight, deep inside they were greatly perplexed. The social status of the Academy’s staff, even the principal, was below them.

That itself was fine. The concerns regarding social status happened every year. The problem was when the offspring of the most influential people clashed between themselves. It would bring heaps of trouble and if such a thing indeed happened, what could be their course of action?

「Let’s try checking the roster again. If it comes to the crown prince, there is no problem about his temperament. As expected of his majesty the future king, how praiseworthy.」

The teacher in charge reported about the prince, while holding documents in hand.

「Do you believe in that?」

In contrast, another teacher had a different opinion.

「That is…」

「There's no way official information from the palace would report the crown prince as having deplorable character.」

「You shouldn't speak so carelessly.」

The faculty leader immediately reproached that teacher. It was a remark that could easily be taken as saying that the crowned prince has a deplorable character.

「…Ah, that's right.」

「Discipline, swordsmanship and magic prowess, no matter which you choose, there is no mistake that he really excels in them. In addition, wouldn't one think that proper conduct was engraved into him as the the crown prince?」

The teacher who reported information about the crown prince first added redeeming qualities as well. It was probably to follow up on the faculty leader.

「That's right isn't it? Well then, let's move to the next one.」

Taking such statements, the teacher in charge put an end to the talks about the prince and proceeded with the next subject.

「Yes. It's viscount Lancelot Minister of the House Aqusmea.」

「Well then, on the Academy grounds it will be Lancelot-kun, just to be safe.」

The warning of the faculty leader arrived again. It was the duty of the faculty head to guide the teachers. Deciding a nickname for a student among other things, was made to protect them too.

「…Uhh, It's my first time being a homeroom teacher so…」

Even if doing so was a bewildering novelty for the teachers.

「Get used to it. This is an order.」

「Understood. Lancelot-kun has good grades and displayed an excellent talent for magic as well. His personality is described as being mature.」

「…Then how about Charlotte-san?」

The one to speak was the teacher who raised concerns about the reports regarding to the crown prince.

「It's the same.」

「The same? So both of them, are not only of high social status but also have an excellent talent compared to most of people?」

Again, that teacher had raised his doubts. If one wanted to describe it gently, his conduct was cautious, but to put it bluntly he was simply mistrustful.

「That's just how it is with the royal and marquess families.」

The faculty leader declared flatly.

Those with outstanding talents had them due to their bloodline. It was the reason why aristocrats had been as respected as they were. Even if one thought otherwise, one must not deny such a thing at any cost.

「…Ah, that's right. If that's the case, then Vincent-kun should be excellent as well.」

「His talent in the sword is lacking and his physical strength is a problem. His talent in magic is about average. Well he's just growing. He only studies if he is given motivation so proceed with caution. Although his character seems a little bit selfish from the outside, inside he seems really gentle.」

「So… only this piece information is really accurate, right?」

「That's how it has been written. Well even if you don't see the reports, his case is a well-known one after all.」

「Well-known?」

「Have you not heard about it? He ran amok after getting failing marks on the trial ceremony for magic and not being satisfied with the result. He also broke important magic tools in the process and Lancelot-kun who was supposed to take the trial with him was not able to do so. It's seems he is a person much frowned on.」

「…That's the worst, isn't it?」

His conduct was exactly alike to that of the anecdotal selfish aristocrats. Just hearing about the story, the face of the teacher immediately turned dejected.

「Yes, Vincent-kun is a student that needs further attention, even among those first year students.」

Declaring this, it seems the Faculty head had also checked him beforehand.

「…I'm in charge of the B-class where Vincent was assigned though!」

It seems that was the reason why he suddenly turned dejected.

「Eh? Is that the case?」

On the other hand, the teacher assigned to A class was all smiles.

Normally, the implicit rule stated that the high aristocrats should be in the A class and followed by the lower aristocrats in B and C class accordingly. If it's the children of the marquesses, then they should have really been in A class.

Under normal circumstances, he would be dejected knowing that there would be a problem child in the difficult to handle A-class, but it seems this time that was not the case.

「For some reason, his name appeared on my B-class roster. Isn't that odd?」

The one who answered his question was the faculty leader.

「It was changed due to reasons.」

「Faculty leader, good heavens! What if the House Windhill complains about that?!.」

「The House Aqusmea representative already came earlier saying, "Don't tell me, you would put them in the same class?"」

「…There's discord already?」

「It seems that is the case. Officially, the classes have been arranged randomly. It has been an experiment in consideration of the Academy's situation, or so runs the official excuse.」

「In other words?」

「Those who are in the same class have different social standings.」

「No way…」

Those who enrolled into the Royal Academy were not limited to aristocrats. Even the commoners, if they passed the entrance exam, would be able to attend. Of course the exam was a really big hurdle that wouldn't let you pass if you did not display excellence. But on the bright side, if one overcame it, the possibilities in one's future would become unlimited.

This year, it seemed there were many successful applicants. Those who passed the exam were informed, that the children of the Royal Family and the three marquesses were enrolled as well.

If they had caught the attention of those young lords and ladies and were used by them, it would be the same as seizing a thread of successful future career.

The teachers could only pray that they would behave well aiming for that.

This way the professors were given a completely new thing to worry about., Now it wouldn't be just usual squabbles between aristocrats, but also discord due to difference in social status.

◇◇◇

The gate was crowded by numerous carriages.

It was a queue of vehicles long enough, that the tail disappeared from view. It was a spectacle that happened every year.

The students were entering the dorms, therefore there was not only a carriage with the person itself, but also a wagon carrying the person's luggage that was pulled along on the road.

It was luggage of young nobles. The amount was high. Even though there would really be plenty already with just the student's belongings, possessions of the servants who tagged along were added as well.

Just looking at this spectacle, one would already guess the social status of the first years. The ones walking on the edge of the street where the carriage lined up, were the commoners who had to carry their own luggage.

「Oi! You're a hindrance! Move aside!」

The black-haired girl turned her head towards where the voice came from.

「What do you mean by hindrance!? I am following the rules! You on the other hand… Eh?」

The girl who threw a fit of complaints all of a sudden turned a bewildered facial expression to Rion. Behind him she noticed Vincent who having complained first, stood there with a displeased expression on his face.

「Erm…, Well, I apologize.」

「Why is Rion apologizing? Isn't this girl the one who was in the way with the luggage she was carrying?」

Because the girl also was a first year student, she must have been a commoner. The large amount of her luggage was placed on the ground. She was probably scolded by Vincent at a time when she was taking a rest due to fatigue.

「That is so, however I also think that the way in which Vincent-sama's has talked was too severe. Shouldn't you speak more tactfully towards a lady, sir?」

「Whether they be a woman or whatever, I don't care. They should not be allowed to hinder me.」

「That may be so, however…. Miss would you please move your luggage aside? The carriages frequently ride through this place so leaving it there would be a hindrance to the pedestrians.」

「Eh? Ah, but…」

「Is your luggage heavy? If that is the case, I can move it for you instead.」

「Ah, no, that's not the case but…」

「Do you want me to carry it for you? If you really wish so, I shall do as you say…」

Rion didn't know the reason behind the bewilderment of the female student. His innermost thoughts were that he got entangled with a somewhat weird woman making him perplexed.

「You're wrong! Erm…, Are you from the House Windhill?」

「…How would you know that?」

Rion's gaze turned severe immediately. He was currently wearing black clothes

and an eye patch to hide his heterochromia. Although doing that wouldn't necessarily hide his handsome face, when his eyes cast a severe glare, the coldness one could feel from them transformed him into a beauty.

Sure enough, the face of the girl on the receiving end, had turned into frightened one.

「Rion. You are scaring the girl as well.」

「Erm… I just want to know the reason.」

With Vincent pointing it out, Rion became conscious of the fact and turned his frown into a smile while asking.

「You called him Vincent-sama…」

「Just from the name?」

「If it's someone from the three marquess houses, I would remember it easily as expected.」

「…You are a first year, are you not?」

「Yes.」

「Understood. Assuming we were indeed from the House Windhill household, what of it?」

It's not like he was content with the girl's explanation, but for the time being, he decided to move on.

「Why are you on foot?」

「Why? We are taking a stroll.」

Rion answered with a face implying "Why are you even asking?". Travelling by foot with no purpose in mind was obviously taking a stroll.

「Yes?」

However, it seems the female student didn't understand.

「Because we're bored, we took a stroll… Keeping in consideration Vincent-sama's… exercise regimen.」

He was about to say "diet" but changed his words immediately. Because he

knew that Vincent would definitely be angry if he said so.

「…But you were supposed to come here in a carriage, and should have forcibly drove in the opposite lane.」

「Yes?」

This time it was Rion's turn to use a questioning tone. He immediately thought that what the girl was saying didn't make any sense.

「No, it's nothing.」

「…What should we do with your luggage?」

「…I will carry it myself.」

「Understood.」

Rion, who at first thought that they were entangled with an odd woman, tried to immediately move away from that place. However, a voice coming from one of the carriages prevented that.

「I will have House Windhill's deplorable acts stop now!」

「What? I haven't done anything!」

「Are you not bullying the female student? To think you would brandish your family's influence towards a helpless lady! If such a thing is not disgraceful, then what is!?」

「Like I told you, I have not done such a thing!」

「I'm telling you to stop!」

「Getting full of yourself… Firstly, just who the hell are you?」

「What did you say!?」

Vincent's opponent raised a startled voice. Well that was to be expected.

「Vincent-sama, is that not Lancelot-sama of House Aqusmea?」

Rion whispered to Vincent.

「…Come to think of it, we have met before haven't we? However, it was when we were children and, I can't remember it clearly.」

「Even if that's the case, looking at the crest on the carriage…」

There was a spherical emblem of three water drops placed in a swirling manner on the carriage that Lancelot rode. Every aristocrat in the kingdom knew that crest belonged to the House Aqusmea.

**( EN : Think sharingan , Another EN: think Ni no Magatama swirling{Mahouka})**
**(TN: What I remember was how the Uncle of Zuko in the Avatar series drew the element symbols)**

「…Oh that's right. What should we do?」

「A conflict between two from the marquess households would not benefit the country.」

「Right, then what should we do?」

「Let us withdraw from this situation and depart. I shall take care of the small details.」

「Alright, I'll leave it to you.」

Rion separated from Vincent and stood in front of the female student.

「To be frank, I do not know the reason, but if we have offended you in any way, I apologize. Please forgive us.」

Having said that, Rion bowed deeply.

「Eh? Ah no… I」

「Will you forgive us?」

「Erm… Yes.」

「Well then, please excuse us.」

「Ah…」

「…Is there anything more?」

「You are?」

「I am merely Vincent-sama's valet. Though there is a possibility of us meeting in the academy, as I am just a lowly servant, please ignore my existence.」

「Ignore? There's no way I can…」

「That's as far as my existence goes.」

The real intention behind stressing it was because he didn't want to be involved with a seemingly troublesome woman.

Sending a signal to Rion, Vincent walked ahead looking displeased. He must have gotten irritated with the other noble who was still spouting complaints.

Passing the carriage that Lancelot rode and lightly bowing his head,Rion followed Vincent.

The female student who saw that muttered softly.

「It seems that apart from the regular capture characters, there is someone like you as well, huh? Was he a hidden target?」

**(TN: This felt like a sudden bomb drop or something, lmao.)**

If Rion heard her voice just now, his hypothesis would be justified.

But since he did not, he just advanced forward.

Soon, Rion halted and turned his head towards the already distant girl, the scene somehow piquing his curiosity.

Handing her luggage over to Lancelot, the female student rode in his carriage.

Even though she refused him, who was only a valet, it was okay for her to have Lancelot carry her luggage. Rion thought he was correct considering her odd.

「Rion! What are you waiting for!?」

「Yes, coming.」

Stopping any further thoughts, Rion followed Vincent's back.

「Rion has been right, entering ahead of time has been the right thing to do.」

「To think getting ahead by day would be that much different after all. Although moving the entrance of the other aristocratic families to a further date would have prevented such a crowd from happening in the first place.」

「That's right, isn't it? That aside, the woman before has been quite weird, hasn't she?」

「So Vincent-sama thinks so as well? It would be better to not get entangled with such a person. I have a feeling that this type will bring you nothing but troubles.」

「Right, I'll be careful.」

Unfortunately, this warning of Rion would be meaningless. Even if Vincent had no desire to do so, getting entangled with the woman was something destined to happen.

The Rion of that day, have yet to understand it. That this world was not just an "alternate world", but was a "special world" at the same time.

That this world has a "protagonist" in it and the woman they met just now was that "protagonist".

◇◇◇

Waking up when it was still early and starting his training, even though his life in the Royal Academy had just begun, Rion had not the tiniest bit of intention to change this habit. Actually, now that he left the mansion, he planned to do more training and studying.

He, who was merely a valet, didn't have the right to attend classes. Although he had to go to Vincent's classroom during break time, his working hours were limited to that only.

The time he could use freely for himself has multiplied. As to how he should use that time, Rion was thinking about it while swinging a sword.

What should he prioritize? Swordsmanship? Magic? His studies? If it would be studies, then what kind? Although he was free to that degree, that was not what was occupying his mind.

It was full of curiosity towards the female student.

It seems that the incident that had happened between them had by now spread widely inside the academy. In a rather warped way.

Vincent, who was from the marquess house, was wielding his authority to bully

a female commoner. However, rather than yielding, the girl pointed out his errors instead and Lancelot, happening to see her dignified conduct, had decided to help her.

Thus Vincent, unable to continue the harassment, was forced to apologize to the girl.

The female student not yielding to the heir of a marquess and magnificently repelling him with sound reason, immediately became the center of attention. Being able to get closer to Lancelot of the Aqusmea due to that was also a reason why the rumour has gained the attention of many.

In return, Vincent's reputation plummeted. The rumour making rounds said that it looked like the rumored black sheep of the Windhills was really a failure.

Rion could not understand why was such a falsehood spreading through people as if it was a fact. The queue of the carriages was very long, there should have been numerous witnesses.

He felt an ill-intent behind the rumours.

Even though they were trying to raise Vincent's reputation for the succession conflict, it plummeted instead. Rion would not permit such a thing. He could not forgive himself for letting it happen.

Leaving things as they were wouldn't be good. Merely strengthening Vincent's swordsmanship and magic would not be enough.

The succession conflict was political. In order to become the victor, necessary knowledge and strength had to be obtained at all costs. Rion's sword-holding hand was inadvertently filled with strength.

As if reacting to that resolve, the spirits began to gather within his surroundings. Different from before, their appearance now easily reflected in Rion's eyes.

Being completely unlike the spirits of Ryou's world, the appearance of those was perfectly spherical. Rion could now call them easily as he liked.

Or rather, truth be told…

「Sarah, Diane, have you been trying to cheer me up?」

He had even named them.

Although even when he spoke to them, there was, of course, no reply. But even so, during times there had been no people in his surroundings, Rion began to put his thoughts and feelings into words in this way, and had been talking to them.

It didn't really have a specific purpose. If he must really say it, he had no proper conversation partners other than Vincent and Ariel, and those two were his lords. They were not people whom you could vent your complaints to.

To Rion, the spirits were the only beings that he could speak about such things.

「Or perhaps, are you just hungry?」

The spirits gathered on both hands of Rion and had begun to absorb mana.

「…are you koi* that swarm on a bait or something?」

**(*TN: Fish, who actually doesn't know about it?)**

Those were Ryou's thoughts that were put into words. Ryou's consciousness had still remained in this mind and not just that, the consciousness of Flay who resided in this world could also resurface.

The two individuals' sense of values hugely differed from each other, so they had met, but were not able to merge completely.

That resulted in the personalities residing in his body turning into three existences – Rion who was the master personality and the fragments of the two that had not fused.

Rather than becoming one personality, the combination had transformed it into three.

Even Rion himself could not help but feel amazed about that peculiarity. And although it made him feel some apprehension, he had also accepted it. Every single one of them had been Rion after all.

It was also unexpectedly useful at times.

「Build an information network, huh? That's an idea.」

While being accompanied by the spirits, he had also began thinking of a way to raise Vincent's fame . If one was burdened by malicious rumors, then the only way forward was to establish favourable ones. If the rumors were really spread with ill-intent, then he had to obtain the strength to determine the source.

「So in the end I really must lay my hands on someone again, huh? If that ever reaches Ariel-sama, I'm going to be whipped badly again, huh? A really serious whipping…」

While wearing a bitter smile, Rion put on the eyepatch that he took off earlier. That was to not let Vincent's reputation suffer due to having a valet with heterochromia.

Everything was for the sake of his master, Vincent. It was for the sake of Vincent's victory in the conflict of heirs and Ariel's successful future.

With the rising sun on his back, Rion returned to the dorm.

# Being followed by a weird woman.

Okay, I really planned to translate at least two chapters this week but it seems my body doesn't agree with me. Fatigue must've caught up and it seems I've caught a cold. Anyway, I can flush out colds in 2-3 days but I wont be able to translate with it.

Sorry guys, this is probably the only chapter for this week.

Note: Once we are done editing 1-5 I'll probably either edit the past chapters to replace them or release a pdf. Please do give it another read.

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 9 :**
***Being followed by a weird woman.***

It wasn't only the young aristocrats receiving different treatment based on their status and title rank, their servants were treated differently too.

Although the attendants were made to be on standby in the common rooms while their respective masters were taking classes, even those rooms varied depending on the House they were serving.

This year the best rooms were prepared for the servants of the royal family and the three main Houses. There was a desk that they required to perform their duties prepared for each one of them with an unlimited supply of ink and paper. There was also a napping room attached to the side, truly a luxurious environment.

Even the snacks and confectionaries were of the highest quality. Although those were not for the servants but were prepared for them to take to their lords.

As for what the valets were doing in that waiting room back then, in reality, there was hardly anything job-related for them to do.

Even the ones serving the crown prince and the three lordlings had no other things to do but study. Their valet-related tasks weren't really taxing.

They did not even have the usual job of arranging tea parties since the academic life also had the purpose of intensifying social interactions, there was never really a need to hold one. The valets now had more free days to spend than when they had been living in their lord's mansion.

But of course, specific circumstances depended on the will of the valets themselves, some were just like Rion who thought of it as an opportunity to study diligently.

All servants of House Aqusmea were also of that type, which is why they were enthusiastically writing with their pens in the book on top of their desks. All of them had a reason to do so.

The valet of the heir being the future butler or majordomo was also a usual career progression path in the House Aqusmea. But the amount of staff serving Lancelot was not limited to one, numbering three servants instead.

Of course, it was not because looking after Lancelot was difficult to that degree. Them being candidates for the future majordomo, they were all picked to offer competition to each other.

Next were the servants of the House Fatillas' Charlotte. They, all being maids, had almost no future promotion possibilities. The sole exception was the head maid position, but being given that meant no hope for marriage.

Therefore what those girls wished for was not promotion, but being able to find a marriage partner and quit their work.

As for what those maids were doing right then…

「Hey, why are you wearing an eye patch?」

They were trying to get close to Rion, who was the most striking person among those in the waiting room.

For them, as they did not know his circumstances, Rion was a really suitable partner. If he became the majordomo of a Marquess estate, he would be able to afford an extremely affluent lifestyle, even more impressive, than that of lesser

nobles, and on top of it, he would also wield a great deal of authority.

「Due to injury, it can't see that well. The doctor said that it's better to rest it as much as possible.」

「Injury? Did it suffer harm?」

「Although I can't really tell by its appearance, that may indeed have been the case.」

「So one can't tell at a glance, huh?」

Hearing Rion's reply, smiles floated on the maids' faces. For them, it was important that it didn't impact the appearance or eyesight.

「Your name would be?」

「It's Rion.」

「I see, I'm Mila.」

「Ah, you see, I'm Margaret.」

「I'm Sylvia.」

「Miss Mila, Miss Margaret and Miss Sylvia then, please treat me well.」

「「「…….」」」

The three maids were immediately entranced by Rion who said that with a smile. Although they were older compared to Rion, he had captivated women of an even older age than them before.

Though their first intention was only to lightly introduce themselves, he completely captured their hearts

「H-Hey! You know…」

「What is it?」

「Does Rion know a shop that serves delicious desserts?」

「I'm not very well-versed in those matters.」

「I see…」

The maids thought their attempt to use asking for good shops as a pretext to

arrange a date had failed but…

「But I want to search for such shops because Vincent-sama has a sweet tooth. The problem is that eating dessert all alone was embarrassing..」

「Then, I will guide you to such shops!」

「Are you sure?」

「Yes. I know a particularly good one. Because it's the best, I'm sure it would suit your master's taste. This time, I'll be there to guide you, so let's check it out.」

「… Won't it cause trouble to you?」

「Don't worry! We should help each other in times of trouble!」

「Well then, I accept your offer.」

「I know of shops as well!!」

Witnessing the success of Mila, Margaret has raised her voice without delay.

「Eh?」

「I'm knowledgeable of such places too, so I'll guide you as well.」

「Okay, Thank you very much.」

「Then, when are we going?」

「Wait a minute! I'm the one who was promised first!」

「You have yet to set the date correct? I will ask for one ahead of you then!」

「What did you say!?」

「Be quiet!」

The one who shouted loudly at the maids was one of the Aquasmea valets. However, the three maids were unfazed by this.

「If you want a quiet place, then why not go to the library and study there instead?」

「What did you say!?」

「We are sharing this waiting room. We are not obliged to hold back our voices

just for you.」

「I am trying to seriously study here! Obviously, you are in the wrong by engaging in such frivolous conversation!」

「It's nothing frivolous. Deepening relationship by interaction with fellow servants is an important thing.」

「Interaction? So taking delight while being surrounded by women is called "interaction"?」

「Ha?」

Suddenly being pointed at by the sharp end of the argument, Rion was startled. Although it couldn't be helped because he was one of the causes of the guy's anger, it was still too sudden.

「It seems the valet of House Windhill is easygoing and content with just talking to the maids.」

「…It is by the command of Vincent-sama after all.」

「Talking with maids? As expected of the Windhill's…」

「That I must be gentle to women at all cost. Vincent-sama constantly reminds me of that.」

Rion immediately continued speaking not even waiting for the other guy to finish his words.

「….That Vincent? Telling you to be gentle to women?」

「Isn't that way of addressing Vincent-sama impertinent of you? If that is really the etiquette of the House Aqusmea, then I will respond accordingly.」

「… It is not. However, for viscount Vincent-dono to say such a thing… If that's the case, then wouldn't he have had apologized to that commoner instead?」

What the valet of Lancelot was talking about was the incident with the female student. Which was exactly what Rion wanted to talk about.

「I wonder what are you talking about? It is because he wanted to be gentle towards women that he apologized, even though he was not in the wrong.」 ”

「However…」

「Would you mind me asking a question?」

「What is it?」

「Because you are House Aqusmea's valet, you should've been present there and heard what happened, right?」

「…Yeah, I heard everything.」

After seemingly falling into deep thought for a while, the valet acknowledged it.

「Do you remember the words of caution of Vincent-sama directed towards the female student?」

「Words of caution? I only remember him yelling…」

This valet didn't remember details of an incident that left such an impression. Rion was doubtful of that, but rather than pressing him, he decided to make him speak of the truth himself instead.

「Because the student placed her large baggage on the road, thinking it was dangerous he warned her to put it aside.」

「…Oh, her baggage, huh? Indeed, it was really big.」

「You remember it, don't you?」

「Yeah, because it was carried in our carriage.」

「There is something I want to ask about that incident as well.」

「What is it?」

「That woman was a commoner. And despite that she made Viscount Lancelot-dono carry her luggage. Why was such a thing not rebuked?」

「…Indeed. Why?」

The other valet had "that's strange.." written on his face in capital letters and looked over at his fellows. Their response was the same sort of confusion. Inclining their heads, they were left to wonder about it.

「That female student had caused trouble to others. I don't know why Vincent-sama, who only cautioned her about that, is the one receiving prejudice. To get

through to her, Vincent-sama had shouted towards that female student. And she has done such a thing to viscount Lancelot-dono, which was an even more impertinent conduct in my opinion.」

「Agreed…」

Because class relations in this world were strict, a commoner shouting at an aristocrat was unthinkable. Even if the aristocrats was at fault, because his social status was higher, it would be immediately concluded that it was the commoner's transgression. That was a common practice in this world.

So why did the rumors spreading around go against that reality? After seeing the response of Lancelot's valets, Rion became more confused by the situation.

「It's that woman…」

「Yes?」

The one who cut in the conversation was Mila. She was not even trying to conceal her hateful facial expression.

「That woman's impudence breaks all common sense. Even though she's a mere commoner, she was getting overly friendly towards Charlotte-sama, you know?」

「…Is that the case? But why did you let her do that?」

「I reproached her, you know? However, Charlotte-sama overruled me, and decided to lie telling her there's no need to be concerned about it.」

「…Charlotte-sama herself said that?」

「Because she is a very kind person, she has said so for appearances, but deep inside surely…」

「Is that so?」

Mila's personal opinion was clearly mixed in there, but there was no merit in pointing that out. Rion went back to the valet he questioned earlier.

「…Erm, What does Viscount Lancelot-dono think?」

「Yeah… Probably because he is a tolerant person….., No, that doesn't seem to be the case. It looks to me that for some reason he was interested in that

commoner girl.」

「…Is that so.」

More confusion entered Rion's mind. Even though Vincent and Ariel were fairly tolerant towards Rion who was also a commoner, he knew that their relationship was causing the other servants of the House to knit their eyebrows.

And that relationship was strictly within the limits of servant-and-master attitude. If Rion acted in an overly familiar manner, both Ariel and Vincent would scold him for that harshly.

Although Rion thought for a moment that it might not have been the same in the other Houses, seeing the attitude of the maid and the valet, he understood that it wasn't the case.

Then why was such a special treatment allowed towards that female student? No matter how he thought about it, he couldn't understand.

Not being able to comprehend meant that he didn't have enough information. Rion began to take action in order to spread his information network wider.

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Rion's activities brought a different result than desired. Although he was troubled by it, in a way, it was already beyond his control.

After deepening his relationships with the maids of House Aqusmea, he was able to obtain a certain amount of information from the gossip they shared. He knew from experience, that by placing his sources well, the knowledge he desired would fall into his hands.

The higher the position of the maid, the harder it was for information to reach her. That was why the ones he approached were the best targets in the Academy. One could say that there was no gossip that could elude them and not reach his ears now.

Next, he decided to make a different kind of information network. What Rion was aiming for this time were the commoners. Although the fact that making connections with aristocrats would be hard in Rion's situation was also a factor, when it came to information spreading, he thought it would be easier to do it

through commoners than the secretive aristocrats.

Not just information gathering, but spreading information that was convenient for him was also his objective.

「Yes. Is it fine to leave it here?」

「Y-Yes.」

Rion handed over the bundle of paper sheets to the girl in front of the classroom entrance.

「Please don't let them scatter around again, okay?」

「Ah, Okay. I will be careful.」

The face of the female was bright red as Rion talked gently.

「Well then, I'll be off.」

「Erm!」

「Yes?」

「Thank you very much, Rion-sama.」

「No, please do not mind it. But about my name…」

「You are well-known for being a very kind person…」

「Well that is embarrassing. Besides, being gentle is due to my master's constant reminders.」

「Your master?」

「It is Vincent-sama of Marquess House Windhill.」

「Eh?」

Hearing the name of Vincent, the female student raised a surprised voice. Although he felt quite down upon seeing that reaction, Rion did not let it show on his face but continued to speak while staring into the eyes of the female student.

「Because he is an awkward person, he gets misunderstood easily. Please, try looking at his true self.」

「…Okay… It’s your request after all.」

「What is your name? I’m afraid not knowing it puts me at a disadvantage.」

「…It’s Anne.」

「Anne-san. Well then, farewell, until opportunity arises to meet again.」

「Yes. Erm.」

「What is it?」

「If I stumbled upon Rion-san, would it be okay to greet you?」

「Yeah. We got to know each other after all.」

Just like that, if there was a female student in trouble, he would lend them his hand in any way required and telling them afterward that it was due to Vincent’s guidance.

Although he did it to spread the impression that there would be no way that Vincent would be rude towards a lady, the spreading rumor was completely different.

The rumor making rounds with the female students said that there was a considerably beautiful valet who might have looked a bit cold on the outside but was actually very gentle.

Most female students Rion met would tell others they couldn’t fathom why such a lovely person was serving Vincent as a valet.

The only reputation going up was Rion’s while Vincent’s never changed.

However, there was one more person losing popularity because of that.

That female student was-

「Rion-san!」

「…Maria-sama.」

「Please drop the honorifics, I’m a commoner, you know?」

If you were aware of such things, then you should be more careful about your way of speaking. After all, I might have been a commoner too, but I was still a retainer of a Marquess House. Those were the thoughts Rion had at that

moment, but wouldn't say. Anyhow, he didn't want to get involved with this female student, he decided that even before their first meeting.

「Do you require something perhaps?」

「Nothing in particular, but since I caught sight of you…Can't I?」

She looked at Rion with the upturned eyes like those of a spoiled child, but he wasn't a person to be moved by that.

「I am in the middle of conversation with Anne-san.」

In other words, no, it was not a good time.

「…Erm, are you still talking?」

「We're almost done, but I feel that ending the conversation in such a way would be discourteous. Anne-san, I apologize.」

「No, I do not mind. Besides, the one at fault was…」

The gaze of Anne went towards Maria. Much different to the look she gave Rion, it was very cold. With this, again, Maria gained the enmity of another female student.

Even though it's not like there were no other chances to become closer to him, Maria still kept approaching Rion one way or another.

Their first conversation was her apologizing for having Rion apologize. Although it would've been better if she ended it with just that, Maria began to bad-mouth Vincent afterward. Having everything forced on you was hard, right? Although she said that with sympathy, Rion could only take it as a besmirching his master.

Although it made him instantly displeased, thinking about the possibility of another strange rumor spreading, he held back his feelings earnestly. However, the House Fatillas maids who saw it exploded in fury.

That scene they saw was Maria forcing herself on the reluctant Rion, and while it was really like that, he looked more pitiful in their eyes than what was actually the case.

The three maids immediately yelled at Maria. However, that was immediately

rebuked and halted by their mistress, Charlotte. Due to that, their animosity swelled up even more.

The maids' sentiment was favorable to Rion and it had spread to the other female servants in the Academy. Maria became a horrible woman for all those that heard about it.

And yet, not learning her lesson, Maria still never stopped trying to speak to Rion. With that, the animosity towards Maria had even spread to the female students. Not only because they were attracted to Rion.

It was also due to the spreading jealousy about Maria's closeness to the great aristocratic Houses, even though she was a commoner like them.

「Well then, I shall excuse myself.」

「Yes.」

「Wait!」

Rion, who parted with Anne and was about to leave, was stopped by Maria.

「Do you still need something?」

「Rather than "still", our conversation has even yet to start.」

「…However.」

「What?」

「Is it fine to talk to me while disregarding the presence of Viscount Lancelot-sama? 」

Maria was not alone. Lancelot and Charlotte were together with her.

Because this happened all the time, it made Rion think of Maria as troublesome all the more, but today he planned to make use of the fact.

「That's no problem.」

「I don't think this is Maria's to decide.」

「But..」

「It's going to be a bother, isn't it?」

「…No, it's nothing. Maria wanted to talk to you, so it's not for me to

interfere.」

「However, I am but a mere valet.」

「I know. How many times do you think we met?」

「…」

Was it fine to settle it with such a lenient comment, Rion asked himself. The position of the aristocrat and commoner was different, and with the noble being more important and from the Marquess House, he should be prioritized more.

Of course, there was no way Rion could say that. If he was Lancelot's retainer, he would be admonished, but Rion was an employee from a different House.

The silence was the best protest he was permitted.

「If you do mind it, then I will order you myself. Listen to Maria. You may be a valet of another household, but there is no way you would disobey my words, is there?」

「With respects sir, I will if it goes against Vincent-sama's commands.」

「…Is that so. Then what about this situation?」

「…Unfortunately, I was told to be gentle towards ladies.」

「Then speak with her.」

「…Understood. Well then, what is your business?」

「This time, we are going to eat tasty sweets together. Won't Rion come as well?」

Calling Rion without honorifics suddenly made his eyebrow twitch. No one noticed because it was the one under his eye patch.

「…Is that invitation for Vincent-sama?」

「No. It is Rion that I am inviting.」

No honorifics again. The mature Ryou went to work on soothing Rion who was about to shiver. Of course, no one in his surroundings could know that.

「Though you troubled yourself with inviting me, I will have to decline.」

「Why?」

「It is not proper for a valet to dine with important personages without the presence of his lord. And even if that wasn't the case I sadly have no time for such pleasantries.」

「They won't really mind your presence there. Besides, you lie about not having time for it.」

This persistence has irritated Rion even more. The only person he would ever permit that attitude from was Ariel's. This reaction was entirely dependent on Rion's feelings and has nothing to do with stubbornness itself.

**[PN: somehow the proofreader is also getting irritated. Apologies to the Maria faction]**
**[TN: I feel you.]**

「Why do you say so?」

「Because you went on a date with Charlotte's maid.」

「…I was planning on informing Charlotte-sama of that matter.

「Charlotte said that she didn't mind.」

「…It was not a date. I just asked them to guide me to shops with delicious confectioneries. Those kinds of things are also among the jobs of the Valet.」

「Was it delicious?」

「…Yes. I was introduced to a really good shop.」

Rion already knew the words that would come next even without hearing them.

「Then, let's go there.」

「By all means, do as you please. As I have told you before, I do not have the time.」

「But…」

「I must go to Vincent-sama's side immediately. This takes precedence over anything else, so please do not hinder me anymore. I have to excuse myself.」

Breaking off before Maria figured out a retort, Rion left the place quickly.

「…As expected of hidden characters, capturing seems difficult.」

Due to that, Rion was not able to hear that mutter.

# Something like a “summer vacation” doesn’t concern valets.

Welp, this is really late. The fever I had turned out to be a flu but I’m fine now. We have decided to change the Uztein to Austin.

Well then, with all that said, enjoy~

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 10:**
***“Something like a “summer vacation” doesn’t concern valets.”***

With the first semester ending as if in a blink of an eye, the summer break has arrived.

Rion came back to the mansion a little later than Vincent. Tidying things up in the dorm and borrowing books he wanted to read, while on holiday, being one of the many reasons for the delay.

However, that was just for appearance’s sake, in reality, he just wanted a little more free time to deal with certain matters.

Matters not related to the Academy, but to the slums.

「What’s the situation?」

「We managed to absorb several smaller players. However, the problem is that the opponent was aware of our plan and did the same thing, so the balance of power is yet to change.」

「This “opponent” being?」

「It’s Gordon’s bastards.」

「Oh, there was him too, huh? That guy.」

Even Rion knew him by the name. Gordon was the leader of a major group, who was controlling a separate territory when he was still residing in the slums. His gang was among the one of the few who were proficient in direct conflicts. Now, his opponent was going to be Rion’s organization.

「Because their strength is roughly the same as ours, no side dares to make a move.」

「But, if we dealt with him, we would gain total control in one fell swoop, huh?」

「Well…」

「How about a direct assault?」

「We might be able to win, but we would likely suffer too much damage. That would create an opportunity for the other bastards.」

「Other bastards?」

It looked like there was another influential gang that Rion didn't know about.

「Bastards from the Courtesan Quarter next to the slum area. It's them.」

「So just looking at the situation inside the slums alone is not good enough. What if that Gordon was taken care of?」

「… I wonder… He has a second and third-in-command after all.」

The subordinate answered after being lost in thought for a bit. It was not very encouraging.

「So they might fall into chaos for some time, but a new leader emerging fast is guaranteed, huh?」

「Most likely.」

「Then doing things by force is no good. Looks like we must crush them with economic strength, huh?」

「What is that?」

The scoundrels of the slums didn't know concepts like "economic strength".

「Erm… Outdoing them.」

Rion answered after finding a word that fit well as an equivalent. This happened often in conversations with them.

「Yeah. But how do we do it?」

「I will think of something. What are your sources of income?」

「Gambling, prostitution, loans, black market, tasks you don't talk about to others. Well… It's killing.」

「…」

Upon hearing the words Rion's mind was greatly perplexed. Although he was already aware of that, being told straight in his face still shocked him.

「Is something wrong?」

「The person inside me was just a little bit surprised.」

「What are you saying now? Isn't boss also from this area?」

「Like I said, the person inside me… Let's leave it at that. What is the most lucrative business, loans?」

「Erm… Well, trying to borrow money in this place is the last resort for people. So it's not very good. Also, although the interest rate is higher than elsewhere, repayment collection is…」

「In that case, what's better?」

「Gambling is stable.」

「Stable, huh?」

Gambling was rigged to make the house win and the man was saying that it was stable. However, it was done by other organizations as well. So something was needed in order to surpass them.

「Well then, should we improve the overall quality of service?」

「Se… Seh… What is it??」

( *EN: He tries to pronounce the unfamiliar word "services" )

「Because improving the profits instantly seems unlikely, we just have to make gamblers think that our gambling hall is better than others.」

「Oh, but how do we do that?」

「With trivial things, like offering those who come to gamble a cup of tea or some snacks. We should have beautiful girls… Ah, prostitutes even, to offer

entertainment too. I want to make those who win spend more money.」

「I see.」

The businesses of this world were yet to invent extra services. Just those trivial ideas already brought admiration of his subordinates.

「That being the case, we should do something about the prostitutes. Make their appearance neat, and give them proper attire.」

You couldn't say that the quality of the women selling their bodies in the slums was good by any standards. That being the case they would not do as service.

「That's right, isn't it? If that's the case, then those who cross-dress like boss are bett… I apologize.」

Under Rion's glare, the panicking man visibly shrunk.

「…Well, that's how it is. Let's raise the quality a bit and have them bring the customers in. We also have to clean the place… And manners must also be taught, huh?」

「Even that?」

「We need a key characteristic to differentiate us from others… We need a capable person, huh? From fallen nobles… Or is there any kind of place with excellent young ladies that have come to ruin? We'll have those kinds of people teach etiquette.」

「I will try searching.」

「Conducting repairs on the buildings and cleaning up the roads is a must. Calculate the necessary expenses for that.」

「… Understood.」

Because the subject of the conversation was getting wider, the man was perplexed. This was the same as usual too.

His subordinates were always surprised by his ideas that came from Ryou's memories of the other world. Moreover, whenever he thought up of something, it would be followed by a bunch of other things.

For his subordinates implementation of all that was quite difficult.

「However, wasting money is not good. The things that you are able to do, you should do them yourselves.」

「Yes.」

「I should make you guys learn etiquette as well. A set of manners that you can use when dealing with customers.」

「…Seriously?」

「I'm serious. Let's stop with the "because it's cheap, the quality is poor" mindset. Work harder so that you can achieve fine quality even if it's cheap.」

「Understood.」

「Do it seriously. At the very least, it's better than risking each other's life right?」

「Indeed.」

「Think of other things until my next arrival. I will also think of something, I will see if I can provide the other things.」

「Understood. I will convey that to the others.」

「Well then, I'm leaving it to you.」

With this, after quite some time, the domain under Rion would be tinged with liveliness and not resemble a shanty town any longer. Little by little the neighbourhood would improve and the ones living in it would change.

The dwellers of the slum, for the first time in their lives, began feeling hope for the future. That was certain to change the area altogether.

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After concluding his businesses in the slums, Rion had finally returned to the Windhill manor. Since it was merely the return of a valet, Rion, there was nothing really special about it. He entered the grounds through the staff's door and went straight towards his room.

He planned to inform Vincent of his return tomorrow morning. For today, he just wanted to take a breather…

Having entered his room, his body immediately went rigid. That was because Ariel was sitting on his bed.

「…You are late, are you not?」

「Ah, yes milady. Things took more time than expected.」

「I see. Hurry up and take it off.」

「Milady?」

「Your eye-patch.」

「Ah, that's right, isn't it? It's not necessary here.」

While inside the mansion, there was no need to hide his heterochromia. Rion took off his eye-patch as ordered.

「Come here.」

「…Erm?」

「That's fine already, take a sit in front of me.」

As usual, an expression that won't let you argue or refuse. Rion went down in front of Ariel on his knees. While he looked up towards the girl she put her hands on his cheeks.

「Ariel-sama?」

「Stay still… As I thought, beautiful. Rion's eyes are really beautiful.」

Saying so, Ariel was staring intently into Rion's eyes. For him, the eyes looking at him were even more beautiful.

「How many?」

「Milady?」

「How many women have been seduced by those eyes?」

「… Seduced?」

「Don't play a fool. I listened carefully when onii-sama talked about it. You seduced indiscriminately , whether it be the retainer maids or the female students, right?」

「No milady, I did no such thing.」

「You are lying, aren't you?」

Ariel's hands, that were gently holding his cheeks until now, began tapping them lightly.

「…It is not a l-」

「Still trying to lie?」

Those hands were starting to gain strength. The tapping sounds made way for loud slaps.

「It's not… A l-lie… I-It hurts. Please, milady, stop it.」

「I refuse, I won't let you lie to me.」

「R-rather, than, seducing it was…」

「You plan to continue on lying?」

「I-It was gathering, i-information.」

「Hmm?」

「It's similar to what I did in the mansion before. I was thinking of gathering information.」

「That…! How many women did you do it with!?」

「I didn't! I never made that kind of a relationship in there! I'm telling the truth!」

「… Really?」

「It is the truth.」

「I see. In that case, I'll forgive you.」

「Thank you very much milady.」

Although he was being hit due to false accusations, and even though this was not a moment to be grateful, Rion didn't mind it.

「…But, why did you do such things?」

「That is…」

Rion told Ariel about the things that had happened in the Academy.

That he had done so to raise Vincent's reputation, only to see it get worse for some reason. That to stop this trend and make his master's reputation go back to the better path he needed to gather intelligence. That to achieve it he decided to widen his connections within the maids and the female students, and so on.

Ariel was making a difficult face while intently listening to the story.

「I am very sorry for not being able to carry out my duties properly.」

「…No. We're just starting. There should be plenty of opportunities for redemption.」

「Yes milady.」

「…Have you met him?」

「Met who?」

Rion felt that Ariel was acting differently from usual. The flow of the conversation has changed, and it was hard for him to catch up.

「Have you met the Crown Prince?」

「Ah. Not really, it's was more like catching a glimpse of him.」

「I see. What do you think?」

「…His aura is so calm that it's unthinkable that he is of the same generation. That's about it. I only saw him from afar after all.」

「Oh right.」

「Milady, have you not meet him?」

Now, Ariel and the Crown Prince were betrothed. Though there should have been many opportunities for them to meet, basing on how Ariel talked, it didn't feel that way.

「… Only during the engagement ceremony.」

「Only then?」

「It's a political marriage after all. The Crown Prince doesn't think much of me, you know?」

「Even though it's just a political marriage, if enough chance meetings were arranged, surely he would come to grow fond of you. If it's Ariel-sama then that's certain.」

「If the meetings have accumulated, huh?」

Even with Rion's words of encouragement, Ariel's facial expression didn't change. Thinking that it was due to the shock that her relationship with the Crown Prince was not going well, Rion's feelings had turned gloomy as well.

「It's the first time I've been separated from Rion for so long ever since we met.」

「That's right, isn't it?」

「It has only been roughly two years since you arrived here. Is this long or short? I wonder.」

「I think that what determines whether that is long or short is not the amount of time spent together, but how it was spent.」

「Oh, indeed. What does Rion think?」

「…I consider that span of time irreplaceable. I expect the same of the time from now on.」

「I see…」

「Milady… Did the separation perhaps make you lonely?」

「Wha!?!」

Completely taken by surprise of Rion's question, Ariel couldn't say anything. Her body turned stiff and her face flushed bright red.

「It's the first time since birth that you have been separated from your beloved brother so, I think that's inevitable.」

「… That's right.」

「Why not take advantage of the holiday? 」

「Right, I will do that.」

While grinning and smiling, Ariel has again put her hands on Rion's cheeks.

This time, she didn't hold back from the start. Accompanied by loud sounds, they began to swell.

「Erm…I…t….h..ur…t…s」

「In this one month, I will tease you as with all my might.」

「Eh? Ah– i-it hurts!」

After that, Ariel continued smacking Rion until his face turned red.

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Despite returning to the mansion after a long absence, Rion's life did not change. He continued his studies and training every day.

He was forging his body in pre-dawn darkness and taking tutorial classes under the pretext of "aiding Ariel and Vincent". Occasionally, he was practicing dance and etiquette as well as swordsmanship.

When it was time for magic training Rion didn't participate. Although that made Ariel displeased, unusually, Rion stood firm in his refusal.

Apart from that, he would be practicing letters and self-studying using the books he borrowed from the library of the Academy. Finally, there was one of his few secrets that only Vincent and Ariel knew of. The projects involving the slum area.

Valet-like works were yet to come but, that was the same as usual.

Rion always thought he was really blessed. Although the treatment from people other than Ariel and Vincent was unchanging, for Rion those kinds of things didn't matter.

He had already gotten used to it. It has always been the same, ever since he became old enough to be aware of his surroundings.

The only part of life in the mansion that Rion was unhappy with was the night time.

On the bed, inside the dim lit room, one could barely see white skin. There, a pair of legs stretched out to embrace Rion.

While in that position Rion's body was moving slowly. Matching those

movements heavy breathing of a woman could be heard in the room.

Finally, with a final loud gasp, she hugged Rion's body with all her might. Right after that, her strength left her completely. Exhaling deeply the woman stared blankly at nothing in particular.

No matter how he looked at it who it was, for Rion, such a thing was only vile.

「…That was great.」

After some time, the woman, who for a while looked like a listless corpse, spoke .

「Great?」

「Even though you're just a kid…. To bring so much pleasure.」

「…Is that so?」

「Yeah.」

「I wouldn't know about such things.」

After returning to the mansion, Rion was swarmed by the maids who were waiting for this opportunity. This one was one of those he created a relationship with way back before leaving for the Academy.

Delaying them for days with all kinds of reasons, he was accompanying them one at a time. But even so, the women he had such ties to numbered five. This turned the situation into having one visitor nearly every night.

Although at first, he thought it couldn't be helped, the maids' desire didn't subside and continued unquenched day after day.

Rion, getting irritated by this, began to treat them more roughly, however, that just brought them more pleasure and their advances showed no signs of stopping.

He felt defiled every day and this made him turn dejected whenever the nighttime arrived.

But even so, what made him carry on was…

「I was designated to attend the tea party held by House Aqusmea.」

…the information that he would obtain.

「…Since when had Erwin-sama established a connection with that House?」

「It seems that it was Viscount Austin who made a move first. I heard that from Will.」

「The vassal family, of their own accord?」

「Even I was surprised. Furthermore, to think Aquasmeas would accept the invitation. If Milady heard of such a thing happening…」

Ignoring Vincent, who was the legitimate heir, and inviting the son of a concubine to a tea party. There's no way Milady, who was doting on her son, would forgive such a thing.

Everyone residing in the mansion knew that. And despite knowing that, Will still accepted the invitation.

Rion thought that while he was away, the situation in the estate was already turning for the worse and that made his chest hurt.

「Is Erwin-sama delighted by that turn of events?」

「He is. That's what I think.」

「Is that so…」

That news was not good. It meant that Erwin's personality was unscrupulous and he had no qualms a thing about disregarding the legitimate heir, even being only a son of a concubine.

「Don't tell others about this, okay?」

This "Don't tell others about this okay?" would lead to sleeping together with her more often. If the maid was to be asked, it looked like they were conspiring together, but he had no such thoughts.

「Of course.」

「Erwin-sama is holding a grudge, you know?」

「Holding a grudge?」

「Against the lord who separated him from his mother and doesn't even care

enough to rein in Milady, who is treating them harshly.」

「…But I heard her social status was not very high?」

If Rion was to be asked, aside from being separated, Erwin was living a life free of inconvenience being surrounded by personal servants. What was he displeased about?

「That's right. She was formerly a maid just like me from a family of baronets.」

「A single generation noble… It's surprising that she was able to become a maid with just that.」

For the maids of the Marquess house, it would be natural to think that their family background was nobility. A baronet was someone who was given a peerage due to achievements, that title could not be inherited. Only the person himself would be given aristocratic treatment.

「That reaction… Rion is yet to meet her, right?」

「I made sure not to approach those who are purposely separated.」

「Well that certainly makes sense with your position. But she was very beautiful, you know? To the point that even fellow women such as me were surprised.」

「So, Marquess had planned to take her from the very beginning?」

「Wrong. Her family had used money and connections in order to ensure she had been hired. It seems her family was a successful merchant house and rumors say that they used a considerable amount of funds in order to make their daughter a maid.」

「…Gaining a foothold by making her a Marquess concubine.」

「Although I can't say for certain, I think the same. No matter how beautiful she has been, there's no way Lord would lay his hands on her without a reason.」

The Marquess loves his wife but also fear her at the same time. Those who work inside the mansion acknowledged this as a fact. It was common knowledge to the point that Rion, who only just started working in the mansion, was surprised by the existence of a concubine.

「…It’s fine to think that there’s an ambition behind it, right?」

「Yes, but even if there wasn’t, wouldn’t the result be the same? I also think that, while it’s commendable that Rion is driven by a sense of duty, it would be better to think about the situation a little more carefully.」

「Is that the case?」

「Yeah」

「I’d rather not, I’m only allowed to serve here because of Vincent-sama.」

Rion didn’t want to seriously ponder it. Especially because the maid was only enjoying playing with fire and wasn’t really Vincent’s ally.

Probably, if she was to be asked, she would most likely think that Erwin was a more fitting successor. This was why Rion answered in a safe way.

「That is the case, isn’t it.」

「Things, that will happen, will happen, my position only gives me the right to think so much.」

「Well, even if he is disinherited, it should not bring troubles to your life. 」

「…Yes.」

With each new piece of information obtained, Rion was again reminded that the situation in the mansion was really turning bad.

He had to work not only on the situation in the Royal Academy, but also on the developments at home, or more specifically, throughout the sphere of influence of the House. However, even knowing that, Rion’s position did not allow for such things.

And even if his position did allow it, Rion had only one body. He was reminded of his own limitations.

It was necessary for him to find allies. Someone who would cooperate with him.

What had to be done to find someone like that? In the meantime, Rion thought only of this.

# Devising a method of defeating a rival

Another new chapter, I do plan to translate more often to improve our pace, specially now that I'm getting more sleep than before, but still with that said, I won't give my word. I don't want to break another promise after all.

Anyway, happy reading!

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi Wo Shite – Chapter 11:**
***"Devising a Method of Defeating a Rival"***

What Rion understood after comparing the different information he obtained from the maids was that the scheme to make Erwin the Windhill's successor had more supporters among the vassal families than just Viscount Austin

The worst news of all was that the plot was also backed by the House Aqusmea.

One couldn't deny other houses' say in this matter. The three families acted as the support of the royals. Together they constituted the strength of the kingdom.

The succession of a Marquess was never a purely internal issue, which is why having House Gran Flamm influence the outcome was nothing unusual.

At the same time the judgment of the royal family would also be influenced by the opinions of the other marquess houses.

If the House Aqusmea had a problem with the Windhill's successor, the king could not brush it off. He had to look into the reasons and if he found something really undesirable, he would make his position clear to the House Windhill indirectly.

No matter how doting the parents were, could their pledge of loyalty allow for ignoring the opinion of the royal family? For Rion, that was still an open question. After all, Marquess Windhill was the one to put Vincent in his current

place while placing great value on relations with other Houses.

Judging by the situation it was likely the preparations to have Erwin to replace Vincent were already in place.

With this turn of events, rather than focusing on building up Vincent's reputation, Rion was cornered into obtaining information in order to defend against the opposition's offensive.

Although a mere valet like Rion could do almost nothing in this situation, he still didn't want to give up and do nothing. To him Vincent was a benefactor. Furthermore, he was among the few people to truly think that Vincent was suitable material for a lord of the marquess house.

Rion was constantly racking his brain thinking about what to do with the current deadlock of a situation but no matter how much he tried, he could formulate no excellent plans.

That's why he decided to just observe the surroundings to try and find inspiration.

「Ain, are you aiming for the boss' position?」

「Eh? N-no, that's absurd. There's no way I would aim for leader's position.」

Being asked such a thing it was obvious a person would tremble. Ain, who found himself on thin ice, was seriously flustered.

「Ah, I didn't mean it that way.」

「…Then, what did that mean?」

「If there is someone who's aiming to become a boss and his value is even higher than that of the boss himself, what should the boss do in that situation?」

「He should kill him shouldn't he? After all dead people can't aim for anything.」

「I guess it really leads to that…」

It's not as though Rion came to terms with assassination, he just expected to get these kinds of answers when asking. There would be no mistake when it came to the scoundrels of the slums.

However, that solution was not completely wrong either. It was true, those

who died could never succeed anything.

The reason why Rion has yet to implement this plan was because there was another self in Rion who thought of the consequences. If the rival threatening the position was suddenly assassinated, Vincent's innocence would be doubted as a matter of course. His reputation was certain to fall to the absolute lowest point.

That doubt would also mean that even after his succession, only troubles would await. House Windhill's influence might also be damaged by such action.

Rion didn't want for any of this to happen.

「If killing him is not an option, what should he do?」

「Threaten him.」

As expected, Ain's answers would amount to illegal acts.

「…..If he doesn't listen? Rather, obviously he won't, this is a person aiming for the boss' position.」

「That's right, isn't it…. I will threaten him using a weaknesses that will make him give up on the position of the boss.」

「…If there's none?」

「Ah no, all human have at least one.」

「Hypothetically speaking, if there's none?」

「He's a troublesome opponent, isn't he?… If there's none, then make one. If he's a man then lead him into a female's honey trap and make him completely fall to ruin with gambling.」

Ain's answers always led to cruel outcomes. But even so, he was not completely wrong. If it was about crushing a person down, lip service wouldn't do.

「Thanks. It's a good reference.」

「No problem. So who is th–」

「What?」

「It seems the preparations are already done.」

「Oh, I see. Then, enter.」

「Understood.」

Obtaining Rion's permission, Ain called people waiting outside the room. A group of females wearing dresses in different colors entered. They were courtesans..

The main reason why Rion came to the slums was this. He brought clothes that Ariel outgrew, that were about to be disposed, for them to wear.

With just putting them on, the women's aura turned rather high class.

Because those were clothes of a lady from an aristocratic family, each piece was quite expensive on its own. It was evident that the courtesans themselves lost to their dresses.

「…Isn't it a bit..」

「It really is. Even I can tell.」

「I know right? So, we can't use this.」

「Ah no… If we made it a little more…」

「A little more?」

「They'll be taking it off anyway, so let's just remove the gaudy bits. If you like, should they just wear the ones with the most transparent fabrics?」

Rion imagined Ain's idea in his head. A girl who is wearing a see-through dress on her bare body.

「…Isn't that too lascivious?」

「They're prostitutes, that much is to be expected.」

「Well, you're right. Is there anyone who can adjust the dresses?」

「We'll have them do it.」

「Well then, make it so. It would be even better if they could make multiple dresses from one.」

「Understood. Well then, with this the clothing part is done.」

「Yeah.」

Announcing the end of the issue of their clothing, the courtesans were ordered to leave the room but they did not.

Rion understood their intentions in just one glance. Each and every one of them headed towards him and tried to appeal to him acting coquettish. Their aim was to make the boss think better of them

They were not successful of course. The girls couldn't know that Rion felt repulsed by suggestive advances by women.

Not even catching his gaze they caused him to knit his eyebrows and when they realized that, the women regretfully left the room.

Relieved with the prostitutes gone Rion let out a light sigh. That showed just how much of a burden the girls' attitude was for Rion.

「Confirm how much time will it take to finish making the dresses.」

「Understood.」

「The building has improved more than I imagined. Maintain that. Frequently wash the towels you use, always practice hygiene.」

The towels were also something the Windhill manor has disposed off. Though it was already garbage for the aristocratic estate, in slums that kind of quality was first-class.

「Understood. I have already secured the person in charge of that.」

「That's fast.」

「Well, of course, When they were told that the people who'll do the cleaning and laundry would be rewarded with money, many volunteered.」

「Did you pick the best?」

「Well yeah, I picked an unusually diligent guy for this neighborhood.」

「That's good. How about the water-heater?」

「It would take a bit more time. But…, Ah never mind…..」

「What is it? If there's something you are bothered about, spill it.」

「….That, isn't that too luxurious? For them to even use a hot bath.」

It was indeed luxurious. Washing the body with hot water. There was no one to experience such thing in the slums if one excluded the fallen nobility. Actually it was also the same with the main street of the city.

However, Rion considered this extravagance an extra service in itself. Besides, the water heater also had another purpose.

「If we secure the spot and person to boil the water for a hot bath, it won't be luxurious anymore. Also, there will be refuse you will have to burn, so that it won't rot.」

「Well…」

「Decreasing the amount of garbage and disinfecting the water will be purely beneficial if you put aside labor involved. However, make sure never to cause a fire.」

In light of Rion's memories of the other world, the situation of the slum area was horrible. It was a place that would be considered uninhabitable to people. He thought of this plans as a way of coming to terms with the situation. At the place of the hot bath one could use garbage as a source of fire.

「Understood. I will excavate another hole on the site and pave the surroundings. With this, the fire should not escape.」

「That's right. It will be troublesome work but somehow keep it up.」

「We have no problem with that.」

「Is that the case?」

「If they receive money for it, won't it be a problem to the applicant…」

「They're jobless after all.」

The usual way of getting money in exchange for hard labor was not as good as this. And other activities carry the risk of getting caught by the city watch, even if not life threatening.

So for the dwellers of the slum, Rion's job offers were delicious opportunities.

「After that, it's the service training, huh? How is that going?」

「If you were to ask me, it’s considerably good.」

「What did the person teaching them say?」

「All the members must pass. But a lot of courtesans dislike it for being troublesome.」

「…So the problem is the willingness. We don’t have the time to wait for everyone of them to pass. Differentiate the income of those who pass and those who don’t. Ah, rather, let’s designate their salaries by using a rankings list.」

「Ranking list?」

「Let’s make a ranking board based on their popularity and display it on the reception desk.」

Was there something like a picture? If only those existed, we could line them up as well, thought the part, that was Ryou. That existence was still a minor and although its ideas were crude, for the the people of the slum they were new and original.

「What should we do with those lists?」

「Offer the customers to pick from them. Of course, that option will carry an extra charge.」

「….I will think of how to do it.」

The idea was fine. However, there was also the problem of how the most unpopular courtesan would gather customers. Fine tuning the details would be for Ain and the others to think about.

「If preparations are finished, we can finally start. Just like with the renovation, we need a person to spread the news by word of mouth.」

「Understood. However, before that…」

「What is it?」

「It would be more advisable to do something about the quality of the women. Even if we manage to spread the good word over a period of time, if the customers think of that reputation as a lie, then it won’t be…」

「Aren’t we doing all this for that to not happen?」

「Ah no, this is not about the discipline, but about the appearance.」

「….Are they still not good enough?」

For some reason, Rion was poor when it came to judging people's looks. Although he could do slightly better with Ryou's point of view, he chose not to use it. Mainly because he hated judging people by the appearance.

「Compared to boss, all of them are…」

**(TN*: This guy really likes cross-dressed Rion)**

Rion's gaze immediately turned icy. He hated hearing that.

「I apologize.」

「…By doing something about it, you meant?」

「Figuring out a way to obtain new women of a good quality.」

「….Scouting?」

「Yes? What is that? That scou-something?」

「Upon seeing a beautiful woman, you would approach them and ask "won't you become a courtesan?"… Never mind, we can't do that anyway.」

「Well…」

「Then, snatching targets out of other shops…. Is no good either, right? This is not the time to aggravate the situation after all.」

「Yes.」

「Then, what should we do?」

「If you allow me to use money, then I will be able to procure them the usual way.」

「Is that so? You can procure them as usual, huh? Incidentally, how do you do it?」

「One is buying them from houses with financial problems, purchasing those who are about to become slaves.」

「….So it's really that… It seems expensive.」

Forcefully cramming Ryou's morality back into a corner of his mind, Rion continued the conversation.

「In a way. Well in regards to the quality, wouldn't it be enough for it to be so-so at the start?」

「Would it?」

「The customers wouldn't expect that much from the slum courtesans. One of the reasons for visiting is the low price anyway.」

「Then if it's so-so, you think the assessment of those who expected nothing rise, don't you?」

「Yes.」

「Alright. Permission granted.」

Rion completely forgot his main objective and began seriously working as a boss of his organization in the slums.

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The first and foremost reason why Rion came to seize the reins of power in the slums was to prevent any possible inconvenience to Vincent. If the local gangs knew that he was working at a marquess estate and on top of that even working for the heir, they were certain to come after him as a good source of money.

There was also the possibility that Rion's origins as an orphan from the slums becoming public knowledge would damage Vincent's reputation. So in summary, his takeover was to defend both of them from multiple risks.

However if that only was the case, then when he was to display his power he should carefully control it. After all, there was also another reason why Rion strove to expand his own sphere of influence.

It was to build up public opinion. The slum residents were intended to be the base for that.

It was a considerably outrageous plan. But even so, if the possibility of pulling it off existed, there would be no way that Rion would not try it.

The things he could do by himself, didn't add up to much. So he clung to the thought that even if it contradicted his other activities, as long as there was at least a minuscule chance of success, no matter how difficult the scheme he had to try and make it happen.

And so, he once again took an independent action searching for a clue to break this deadlock in the Windhill's succession fight.

The Marquess owned a mansion of vast size in the capital.

It was not just a estate befitting a family of that rank to reside in. There also was a chivalric order stationed on site to guard them, along with the numerous servants and their dependents living there and numerous buildings located within the boundaries.

Some of the area was covered with abundant vegetation and thickly growing trees and although calling it a forest would be an exaggeration, that wood glade was wide enough to make such an impression on people.

Rion was currently heading towards that area which made it unthinkable that one was still in the capital when being surrounded by so many tall trees.

Although there was a carefully maintained path that reminded it wasn't really a natural forest, at the moment, he was heading to a place away from it's course.

It was a place people came to only once a year, where even the grasses grown tall, reinforcing the natural ambiance.

Rion's objective was not a stroll to admire mother nature. He wanted to explore the building at the end of it.

Before long, he could finally see it behind the trees and it was an even larger than he expected.

Crossing the courtyard in order to check its exterior out, he also planned to go around to opposite side but…

「Who's there!?」

A sudden voice inquiring about the intruder was raised. It seemed there was a person hidden in the shadow of a tree that he failed to notice.

「I apologize for startling you. I only came here to explore places I haven't seen yet.」

He answered with a phrase he had prepared beforehand with a composed mask on his face, while taking a step forward.

He saw a female figure sitting next to a table in a garden. She looked like a refined lady having tea.

Although his exterior didn't show it, in his mind he was strongly reflecting on the failure to notice all that.

「….May I know who you are?」

The tone of the lady suddenly changed.

「Madam, I am employed as a valet in the manor.」

**(PN: In the raws, Rion already named himself here but it is weird that Julia once again asked Rion for his name in the next page as Editor pointed out. Magical flying away memories)**

「…Why are you here?」

「I was taking a stroll in the glade.」

「Taking a stroll?」

「I wanted to roam around the areas of the estate grounds I haven't explored yet, so I have made free time for it and here I am.」

「….Just because of that, you stumbled upon this place?」

「…Hard to believe, isn't it? Madam, your suspicion is reasonable. It was due to being curious why was this place being avoided by people and being stared at coldly by the passersby. Also other people are still working, so I took the opportunity.」

He acted out the words prepared beforehand.

「I see. What is your name?」

「It's Rion, madam.」

「What is the work you do?」

「I employed as Vincent-sama's personal valet.」

「Oh, is that the case? That's… Unfortunate. How should I say this, won't you be scolded?」

She tilted her head a little with an innocent smile. Although she looked considerably older than Rion, one would normally see her gestures as lovely. As long as it was just a normal person.

「No, madam. Besides, all work has its own hardships.」

「You are diligent, are you not? Do you perhaps know who I am?」

「Madam, I apologize. I do not.」

「There's no need to humble yourself that much.」

「That may be so, however in my judgement you are not an employee.」

「Why do you think so?」

「There is no servant in here that would enjoy a tea in the garden.」

「…Ah, indeed, However, Rion-kun is wandering aimlessly during the day as well even though he is just a servant.」

「…That's right, isn't it.」

Her attitude was truly getting over-familiar. It was the first time that Rion was treated in such a way.

「Sit beside me. I will prepare more tea.」

「I have to refuse. I am fine as I am.」

「But I want you to keep me company for a conversation. I'm bored all alone after all…」

This time she showed a downcast, melancholic expression. No longer charming, the woman's aura turned lonesome.

「Madam, I can listen to you while remaining upright.」

「It would be difficult for me to talk that way. Please, sit beside me.」

「…..As you wish.」

「That too, can't you talk in a more relaxed way?」

「…I shall try.」

「If you like, take a drink. Because you just walked this far, you must be thirsty, no?」

Saying that, the woman offered the cup she drank from not long ago. As far as Rion knew, it was a gesture somewhat removed from common sense.

「I am fine.」

「It's because I have drank from it, isn't it? As I thought, I should prepare more tea.」

「No, I'm fine.」

「Jeez, well then, this is an order. Drink tea with me.」

「…If you really insist, then I shall prepare it.」

「You're going to prepare it?」

「I am a valet after all.」

「…I wonder if it's really something a valet usually does?」

Normal valets didn't. Rion was doing it so that the maids didn't have to approach Vincent.

「Is it fine for me to enter the house in order to prepare the utensils and hot water?」

「…That's a good question, isn't it? It's something that should be entrusted to a maid.」

「Are there none here?」

「I am living alone so that no one would intrude on me during moments likes this.」

「I apologize for being rude.」

「It's fine. It's seldom that I can converse with someone from the main residence after all.」

Again, the woman's face flashed solitude.

The ambiance changed again impacting the mood. Again, a normal person thrown off by such a change would feel attracted to her and her aura.

「Have you ever met Erwin before?」

「I have not.」

「I see.」

「With that way of addressing Erwin-sama, is it possible that madam is Erwin-sama's mother?」

Rion asked, but he already knew who he was dealing with from the very start. It was the Lord's former concubine, Julia. He purposely came here to see her.

「Yes, that's right.」

「Then I must apologize for my impoliteness so far.」

Saying such, Rion quickly stood up from his seat. Watching it with a lonesome face, Julia asked

「Are you not allowed to speak with concubines?」

「No. I stood up because me sharing a table with madam was impertinent.」

「…You are really diligent, are you not?」

「It's something to be expected of other valets as well.」

「I think it would've been better if Erwin's valet was like you. You are close in age, you would be a good companion.」

「That would be impossible.」

「Oh, do you dislike the idea of being Erwin's valet?」

「My feelings are irrelevant, I'm certain the environment wouldn't permit it.」

「…..You are relied on a lot, are you not?」

The conversation paused for a bit. While trying to keep up the appearance of dialogue Rion was trying to decipher the meaning behind those words.

「Madam, I did not mean it that way, I was trying to say that Erwin-sama's

entourage would not permit such a thing.」

「I see…」

「Someone like me is nothing next to Erwin-sama, a superior valet with an abundance of experience is a better fit for him.」

Actually, it was sarcasm aimed at Will but Julia didn't notice that.

「I'm afraid Will-san might not be entirely superior……」

「Is there some kind of problem?」

「…Well it's not something I would consult with Rion. It's a personal problem of mine.」

That last remark seemed meaningful but despite being curious what it was about…

「Is that the case. Well then, I'll forget I heard anything.」

「Forget?」

「An unnecessary information might lead to prejudice. Such things are never good.」

「….Indeed.」

Rion ended the conversation suggesting he didn't care about the story at all.

「Well then, I believe it's time for me to return.」

「I see… Uhm?」

「Yes. What is it?」

「Though it's an unreasonable demand to a valet, won't you come here again sometimes?」

「That, I cannot promise. Currently Vincent-sama is attending the Royal Academy. The only reason why I'm back at the mansion is the school break.」

「Ah, that is right. Well then, It would be fine if it's just during those breaks. I will always be here after all and I would like to know various things about the main house.」

「….If, like today, I have the time.」

After pretending to think about it, Rion answered back.

「Jeez, you are too diligent. As I thought, I really want you as Erwin's valet. And if that is impossible, I at least want you to get along with him. Erwin will come to school next year as well so, when that happens, please lend him your strength.」

「Is that so. Madam, although I do not know if he would ever need my assistance, I shall try if it's something that I can do.」

「That is fine. I'm counting on you.」

Julia stood up, suddenly approached Rion and held his hand with a serious expression on her face. Her blue eyes were staring at him intently.

「If it's within my means.」

Rion did not show any noticeable reaction to Julia's behavior.

「….Yes.」

…And another pause. Rion was observing the woman making such gestures one after another. Although being able to talk with her was an unexpected event, it was an opportunity that he would not let slide.

「Well then, I have to excuse myself.」

「My name is…」

「I know, madam.」

「I see. So that's why you did not ask.」

「Not at all. Demanding an aristocrat's name is reckless and rude.」

「Is that really the case?」

「I remember it being a part of a valet's code of conduct.」

「I see… Is calling a noble by name the same, perhaps?」

「A commoner calling a noble by name would bring discomfort, would it not?」

「That's right, isn't it? However, if it's Rion, I'm fine with it.」

「….I understand. Well then, Julia-sama. Please excuse me.」

「Yeah, see you again.」

Not replying to that, Rion turned and made his way back.

Getting rid of the mask he was keeping up earlier, his expression returned to that he wore when returning from the slums, a fearless face.

Although he was acting the whole time, it was the same with Julia. Rion understood that immediately after meeting her.

He was currently wearing a black eye patch but she immediately accepted that such a suspicious person was serving as a valet. Therefore it was obvious she was already aware of his existence from the very beginning. And yet, she acted as if she didn't and talked to him while feigning ignorance.

Julia clearly realized the worth of her looks and used them with full awareness of the effects.

Flattery was prominent within the eyes gazing on him, but Rion didn't miss the odd look filled with disdain and other complicated emotions hidden underneath it all. Because that was something that he had seen numerous times before.

Any remaining sympathy he had for Julia dissipated. Her current situation was what she desired and furthermore she was taking action to realize her ambition.

Rion came to the conclusion that she was an enemy. That being the case, there was now a need to search for her weakness. And when he began to ponder that it looked as though finding one would not prove to be difficult.

Julia was seducing other people and using them. Surely, there was some sort of wickedness existing in there. After all Rion knew everything about it, he was doing the same thing.

# Having a distinct appearance is of grave importance in Drama.

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**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi Wo Shite – Chapter 12 :**
***"Having a distinct appearance is of grave importance in Drama."***

Rion spent the remaining days of his break preparing for the return to the Academy. For him, these holidays brought fairly satisfying results.

He only visited Julia, the Lord's concubine and mother of Erwin once after their first meeting.

Regardless if his visits were to be seldom or frequent, his motives would still be mistrusted. After promising to somehow make time and meet her, the ones residing in his body have decided to do that only one more time.

On their second meeting, he came to the garden and had a conversation with her. It was similar to the first time, the subjects touched on were roughly the same as well. Julia praised Rion's sincerity and brought the topic of wanting him to get along with Erwin.

Saying that her everyday life was full of boredom she wanted to talk about the things in the main house to ease her sadness. When it came to that, even though Rion's loyalty to Vincent was on full display, he offered answers that Julia wished for as much as possible.

Although he was indicating the possibility of being pulled in as their ally, he was also making them think that doing so would not be simple. He aimed for a delicate impression that he couldn't get too close, but he would find severing all relations very regrettable.

The results were better than expected

After all, Julia's confidence in her own beauty resulted in her being flustered that Rion showed no reaction to her charms.

To Rion, her efforts at seduction weren't even amusing. She was indeed a rare beauty, but her behavior was something he had experienced a lot before.

After concluding that an attempt to entrap him was indeed underway, his assessment of Julia fell down a level, but outwardly he pretended to be a thick-headed child still perplexed about those unusual emotions.

Because Rion's acting was pretty good, Julia, judging by those reactions, felt she got a response.

Rion, accordingly, felt he got a reaction from her. For now, his aim was roughly achieved. It would now be easier to manage the aftermath of Erwin's assassination or to obtain a bargaining chip to force him to withdraw from the succession conflict. Just thinking about it was inadvertently drawing a smile on his face.

–and when she saw Rion's smile.

「What are you smiling about? Do you find not having to meet me anymore so pleasant?」

「I-It hurts.」

Ariel was pinching his mouth with all her might.

「Haa… The days will be boring again.」

「Y-Yesh」

「What?」

「M-My mouth.」

「No.」

「Uu… Y-your fingers.」

「…I guess there's no choice.」

Although what she meant by "there's no choice" was unclear, Ariel let go of Rion's lips. Without delay, he offered a handkerchief.

「What?」

「Milady… Your fingers have gotten dirty.」

「Fingers?」

Ariel shot a glance at her fingers and noticed that they were slightly wet from

Rion's saliva.

「…I'm fine with it.」

「Milady…」

「…I guess it can't be helped.」

Taking the handkerchief she wiped her fingers lightly and raised it towards Rion's mouth.

「I-I will do it myself.」

「I see. Then do so.」

After taking the handkerchief from Ariel's hands, Rion wiped his own mouth while Ariel watched his actions intently.

「Is there something wrong?」

「When will you return?」

「By the end of the year, I expect.」

「I see. That's quite a while.」

「That's right, isn't it.」

「…Then, as punishment…」

「Eh? Why?」

Did he do something that deserved punishment during the conversation? He couldn't recall such a thing.

「It's a punishment for making me suffer boredom for so long.」

「…I understand.」

Rion wondered briefly whether that was even within his remit but he never voiced the thought. He was already programmed never to oppose Ariel. The one who imprinted that into him was of course… Ariel herself.

「As a punishment, you must write me letters.」

「Letters?」

「Reports about the events in the Royal Academy.」

「Oh, so it’s about that.」

「That’s right.」

Unfortunately, what both of them meant by “that” was very different.

Ariel wanted to be told about all kinds of things by making Rion her informant. But he misunderstood and came to a conclusion that she wanted information about the Crown Prince.

This misunderstanding, at a later date, was going to make Ariel displeased, but that story would be for another time.

「Are you done preparing your bags?」

「Yes, mostly.」

「…Then why are you still not wearing the new knight’s attire that I prepared?」

Ariel complained while looking at the set of clothes hanging on the wall. It was black, laced with silver and brand new.

「I was thinking of wearing it on the day of our return to the Royal Academy.」

「Really?」

「Yes milady.」

「Do you like it?」

「Of course. Surprisingly even the size was spot on.」

「Well of course. I measured it properly.」

「….Erm, when..?」

Rion had no memories of that happening.

「It was while you were asleep.」

「Milady?」

「Well If I did it when you have been awake, you would’ve known that I was preparing clothes for you.」

「That is true but..」

「If I haven’t, it wouldn’t be a surprise for Rion at all.」

「I see… I was completely unaware of it.」

The failure to wake up while being subjected to such a thing despite forging his body so hard made Rion depressed but…

「Well, I did use a sleeping drug.」

「….Yes?」

「After all, wouldn't it be exposed if you woke up in the process?」

「…It would…wouldn't it.」

Rion would never complain about whatever Ariel did to him. But this made him reflect on his carelessness in failing to notice that he was given a sleeping drug.

「I believe with this we're done discussing that subject. If you are finished with the baggage prepare some tea for me. I'll have it in the garden. Let's talk there.」

「Understood milady. I will arrange it immediately.」

As if treasuring their remaining time, Rion and Ariel spent their time together like this every day while completely disregarding the suspicions regarding their relations.

Rion was not blind to the attitude from their surroundings, but even so he still never refused Ariel's invitation.

What the two regretted was not how little vacation time remained, but for how long they would be separated next. But they weren't aware of that yet.

As the two embraces their feelings, not even realizing, the relationship of the two continues. Not getting any closer nor getting far from it.

◇◇◇

After the holiday break, the semester would start with an immediate exam.

For the freshmen, it would be their first examination. Because it was the first time that the academic ability of each student was on display, in front of the bulletin board where a score based ranking list was posted numerous students gathered.

「H-hey.」

Among them, one raised his voice. Knowing the reason behind that, the crowd immediately dispersed.

The vacated space was taken by three handsome and beautiful, although still very young people.

The young lord with the radiant blonde hair and crimson eyes was Arnold Highland, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom. The male student standing next to him with blonde hair and blue eyes was Lancelot Minister and the lady, with vivid reddish-brown hair and brown eyes, was the eldest daughter of the House Fatillas, Charlotte Lanchester.

With the three of them making an appearance together, it was natural for the surrounding students to move out of their path in panic.

「So Arnold was reliably first, huh? As expected of you.」

Looking at the ranking table posted on the bulletin board, Lancelot voiced his admiration.

「Oh my, I, and even Lancelot have lost.」

In contrast to that, Charlotte voiced her displeasure.

「I'm not the only one, okay?」

「…That's right, isn't it. Fuun~ *not just by the appearance*, huh?」

**(TN: Honestly, I think this is wrong. the word "mitame/見た目" could mean differently, it could be "Not just on the surface" or something else. Anyway, I don't feel very good about this part.)**

Charlotte's gaze was fixed on the name of the person ranked under the name of Arnold. It was Maria Theodore.

「Speaking of the devil…」

Approaching from the hallway, a female student came towards the board. Framed by the light coming from the windows, with her long, black hair outstretched, she was dazzling. With her cerulean eyes and pure white skin even by looking from afar, one would recognize her as a beauty.

It was Maria, and when she noticed Lancelot her face bloomed in a smile.

Though her delicate face was doll-like already, when a smile brightened it, her charm turned angelic. The surrounding male students could only sigh in admiration while the females could only groan.

「Yo, Maria.」

「Lancelot-sama.」

「What's the matter? I told you that it's fine to drop the honorifics, did I not?」

「You did, but…」

Right after that, Maria's face became cloudy. Just from that expression, Lancelot was able to guess the reason.

「Did someone say something to you?」

「It wasn't anything bad, I was told that it would be good for me to practice etiquette.」

「Hou… Even though I told you that it's fine, someone had the guts to protest?」

「That is…」

「Who is it? Just tell me the name and I'll rebuke them strictly.」

「That person was gentle about it, so…..」

Maria already knew what the meaning of the "Strictly" that Lancelot said was and Lancelot immediately knew that Maria was trying to cover up for the person.

「Maria is really kind. However, I can't put up with you calling me in such a refined manner.」

「…I understand. Good afternoon, Lancelot. Is this way fine?」

「Yeah. That's just fine. However, Maria is really amazing, huh?」

「Eh?」

「Your score. You came to see the results, did you not?」

「Ah, that's right.」

Maria came towards the vacated spot where Lancelot was standing. After looking at the scoreboard and finding her name, she pouted.

「…I lost.」

「Oh? Maria is unsatisfied with being second?」

「I worked hard after all.」

「But only placing second, huh? Well, the person in first place was…」

「Would there be a problem if I finished first?」

Lancelot hesitated to answer Maria's thoughtless question.

「…Maria, it would be good for you to remember the name of the Crown Prince.」

「Eh? Ah!」

「Crown Prince Arnold was the best in the Academy and person himself stands in front of you.」

Hearing Lancelot's explanation, Maria's face was dyed red and her body became stiff.

「…Is my face, perhaps, that strange?」

The Crown Prince asked in a cold voice.

「Eh?」

「I'm asking you if it's really something for a woman to be surprised about.」

「…No, I think it is very dreamy. I might've been surprised due to that.」

「What?」

「Ah, excuse my rudeness. It slipped from my mouth.」

「…You're a weird woman.」

Arnold spoke looking astounded. Maria, hearing that, smiled. She thought that the starting point was perfect, something the surrounding people were not aware of.

「…Are you really happy with being called a weird woman?」

「Yes?」

「You smiled just now.」

「A-Ah, I figured that I heard Arnold-sama's real feelings, so I have become happy.」

「…You.」

Arnold intently stared at Maria as if looking at a weird creature. She caught his gaze with a bashful look.

The two of them stood in silence again.

「Oh well, dealing with Maria, I guess even Arnold's manners will go awry.」

Lancelot smashed that mood. Without a doubt, it was on purpose.

「…My manners weren't really affected.」

「Is that so? Well putting that aside, how about we drink some tea to celebrate the results?」

「How did it lead to that?」

「Isn't that fine? It's the gathering of the four highest scorers of the Academy.」

「Does that mean that she is included?」

Charlotte cut into the conversation sounding displeased.

「It does, why?」

「Don't tell me, you'll let her enter the lounge as well?」

「That was the plan, why?」

「Lancelot, this woman is a commoner, you know?」

The "Lounge" that Charlotte was talking about was a special room for people of high status. Officially it was a club room of the Socializing Club the purpose of which was undefined.

「There is no rule stating that commoners are forbidden to enter.」

「That's true, but… Arnold?」

「….Do what you want.」

「Are you sure?」

For Charlotte his reply was unexpected. She thought that Crown prince Arnold would certainly oppose such a suggestion. Not just because Maria was a commoner. She knew that he suffered from extreme shyness to the point of nearly hating crowds.

There's no way she would let Maria go to the lounge which was his only place to relax.

「Two ayes. It's decided then.」

That was a godsend for Lancelot. With this, if he invited Maria to the lounge again, Charlotte's opposition would be overruled, or so it was supposed to be.

「I'm against it.」

「What?」

A new voice suddenly entered the conversation. As Lancelot glanced in its direction and saw Vincent standing there.

Lancelot's face twisted in an ugly sneer.

「Two ayes and two nays. It's a draw.」

「….This does not concern you.」

「It does. I also have the right to enter the lounge.」

「Rich coming from someone who had never come there in the first place…」

「I was busy. Besides, I am yet to find the reason to do so.」

「Well then, as I thought, it doesn't concern you at all, right?」

「Wrong. The lounge is something that was passed to us by our seniors and will be passed down to our juniors in the future. Its traditions are not something we should change on a whim.」

Honoring the established customs was very Vincent-like. Lancelot who was also an aristocrat should originally have had the same thoughts, but…

「…That's trivial. What's the use of being chained down by the past?」

He still rejected Vincent's words.

「I'm not being chained down. I am just cherishing the tradition.」

「You don’t have the qualifications to say that!」

「I do.」

「None at all. You’re a disgrace to the aristocrats.」

「What did you say!?」

「Look at the rankings. Where is your name placed? You’re the only one from the four families missing in the top ten! You’re not even in the twenties. If this is not a disgrace, then what is?」

「……」

Being told that, Vincent could offer no rebuttal. Full of frustration he could only hang his head in shame.

Lancelot, witnessing that broke into a satisfied smile and continued his verbal assault.

「That’s right. Let’s change the rules of the lounge. Rather than those with higher pedigree let’s make those who really are superior be the ones allowed to enter. If we do that, you won’t have any problems with her entering it.」

「I will not acknowledge such a change!」

「You opinion is irrelevant. Arnold, what do you think?」

「What!?」

If Arnold accepted Lancelot’s suggestion, Vincent would be left with no recourse. Arnold was royalty, and the future king to boot. There was no way Vincent could go against his opinion.

「…This conversation is worthless. Let those who want to use the room, use it.」

「Arnold?」

「This is a waste of time. If you want to go, just go. If you don’t want to, then don’t. Hurry up and decide.」

「….Then, let’s go.」

The reason why Lancelot was forgiven for calling him without honorifics was because the two of them were close. However, he still couldn’t ignore nor go

against the Crown Prince's decision.

「Your highness! Why would you allow that female student to accompany you!?」

「…What did you say?」

The dispute which was reaching its conclusion was reignited again by Vincent. Furthermore, he did it as if questioning the prince's decision. Arnold's face adopted a severe expression.

「Even for a Crown Prince, to ignore something that his predecessors have decided upon… That is…」

Although Vincent raised his voice towards the royal at first, upon realizing Arnold's displeasure, he was not able to continue his argument to the end.

「Rather than being concerned with others, shouldn't you do something with yourself first? You could not even deny the words of Lancelot, could you?」

「That…」

「Such a guy is a Windhill…」

「Vincent-sama, I apologize for making you wait.」

In this situation, Rion cut into the conversation by intercepting the words of the Crown Prince. He concluded that letting the confrontation between Vincent and Arnold continue would not be good.

「Rion, right now the Crown Prince is–」

「Sir? Ah, I'm sorry for my rudeness. To think that it would be his majesty himself.」

「…The servants are just like their masters, huh? To think you wouldn't even recognize the face of your own country's royal.」

「Ah no, the face was familiar. However, I was thinking it must have been a different person. 」

「What did you say?」

「According to rumors Crown Prince Arnold has been wise ever since he was a child. Someone who ignores the admonishments of his retainers cannot be

called that, so I thought it must have been a different person.」

A severe sarcasm towards the royalty. The surroundings exploded with murmurs. and Arnold, being at the receiving end displayed surprise mixed with other complicated feelings while glaring at Rion.

「…You bastard!」

「Rion!」

Along with his voice, Vincent's fist flew towards Rion's face. Flat-footed by this Rion fell down without having to act.

「Such a thing, towards his highness!」

「How cruel!」

「Wha!?」

The one who shouted at Vincent who was scolding Rion was Maria.

「How cruel! Rion faced the Crown Prince for your sake, you know!?」

「Such a thing was unforgivable.」

「To that Rion, to do such a thing! You are the worst!」

「What did you say!?」

「Rion-kun, it's all right!」

As expected Vincent would be furious with such a manner of speech but in that moment, Maria turned her back on him and rushed towards Rion lying on the floor.

「I will heal your injury now.」

「…It's unnecessary.」

It wasn't really an injury, just a few scratches on the lips. And even if it was worse, Maria's healing would still be unwarranted.

「If I do, it will close on its own.」

「That's why healing magic is not needed.」

「But…」

This time, it was Maria's turn to be ignored. Shaking off her arms and standing, Rion came towards Vincent and knelt, bowing his head.

「My lord, I apologize for my behavior.」

「…No need. Just understand that an insult towards his highness is an insult to me as well.」

「Understood sir. I will remember it well.」

「That's fine for me. But…」

「…Of course.」

At Vincent's words, Rion immediately stood up and headed towards Arnold only to kneel down again.

「Sire, I am aware that my conduct is not something that could be forgiven with just an apology. I will accept any form of punishment, what are your orders?

「….Well then. Die.」

「As you wish, majesty.」

Saying so Rion already had a dagger in his hands.

He pointed the tip towards himself, and without hesitation, stabbed himself. The fluid, graceful movements made everyone forget to stop him and only watch in a stunned surprise.

「…Wha!?」

The first person to come to his senses was the one standing in front of him, crown prince Arnold. Seeing the blood flowing from Rion's body Arnold's mind sobered up.

Hearing his surprised voice even the surrounding people became aware of what was happening.

「Ri-Rion-kun!」

Maria desperately rushed towards Rion who seemed to be suffering.

「It's going to be fine! Rion-kun! Pull yourself together!」

Hugging Rion in her arms, Maria cried those words and in reply…

「….B-Be… Silent. D-Don't ….tou…ch me.」

Rion said coldly.

「What are you saying!?」

「…Th-This is, a pu-punishment….., I-I must d-die…」

「Don't say such a stupid thing! Arnold-sama!」

「….Y-yeah?」

「Forgive him, hurry up!」

This was also disrespectful coming from Maria, but no one admonished her. It was not the time to be concerned with such things.

「I-I understand. I forgive you.」

As told by Maria, the Crown Prince uttered words of reprieve.

With this, Rion's sin was forgiven even if it was not Arnold's intention for things to turn out this way. The one who steered things in that direction was actually Rion.

「Now then, you don't have to die anymore. I will heal you, so..」

「Th-There's n-no, need.」

「What are you saying!?」

At the same time as Maria yelled, a gentle wind glided onto Rion's body. Its radiance was steadily increasing and enveloped him completely.

And when that light died down, Rion exhaling sharply once, stood up as if nothing happened.

「…R-Rion-kun?」

「I apologize for making you worry. However, there was already someone else to heal me.」

It was the tone of voice of the usual Rion. Although the surroundings seemed to be at a loss with that, his knight's attire was still stained with blood confirming that what had happened before was indeed real.

「Well then, I will excuse myself.」

「Wait!」

Even after offering his gratitude and separating away, Arnold still called out to him.

「Your Highness? Is there anything else you need?」

「….Ah.. no.. nothing.」

However, Arnold despite calling him, was not able to put his thoughts into his words. Even disregarding facial expression, he was pressured into silence just by the aura that Rion was releasing.

Rion bowed his head once again in front of the Crown Prince and went towards Vincent

「Thank you very much for healing me, sir.」

「…….」

Vincent wasn't able to respond to Rion's words of gratitude. He just stood rigid with stiff face.

「I am fine. I am not hurt anywhere. All thanks to Vincent-sama.」

「…Is that so?」

Finally, Vincent was able to speak few words. Due to that, a smile has returned to his face that looked devoid of strength.

「However, this matter needs to be…」

「Kept secret from Ariel, right?」

「Yes.」

「Well if this really reached her, the outcome would be grave.」

「Surely. She would certainly make a face even worse than she did before.」

「She really would, wouldn't she?」

「Well then, let us return. It seems that Vincent-sama has no time to be carefree.」

Saying so, Rion had once again began walking with Vincent following behind. Such a scene, rather than a Master and a Valet, evoked a relationship like that of a close friends.

「Hey, what did you meant by not having the time to be carefree?」

「Thirty-second.」

「Eh?」

「That was your rank on this exam.」

「Thirty-second, huh?」

Hearing his rank from Rion, Vincent's face broke into a grin. If he was to be asked, ranking thirty-second was better than expected.

「Please sir, do not be delighted with this.」

「But, you know..」

「I also think that those results are fine. However, this shows that if Vincent-sama gives it his all, he is able to learn well.」

「…Well..」

「If you persevere, your ranking is guaranteed to rise. If that happens, then insults like those won't happen anymore.」

「…Sorry… Going to such lengths for me.」

「No, please do not mind it. I only did so because my head lost its cool.」

Vincent owned the loyalty of Rion. If one insulted his lord he would not let it slide, even if is the offending party was a royal.

「However, to think that you would really hurt yourself…」

「Not doing so would be predictable. It was for him to realize the weight of his own words.」

「That's right but…」

「Besides, when I was really about to die, Vincent-sama saved me even though it meant going against the words of the Crown Prince.」

「Well, of course.」

「That's why such a rash action was fine.」

「But even so, it's too reckless. I knew it. Ariel should be told about this. If I inform her, something like this will definitely not happen anymore.」

「That… No, I will gladly do it again. It was for the sake of Vincent-sama after all.」

「However, if Ariel tried to stop it for your sake?」

「……」

His answer was silence. Rion was not able to find the right answer to his question.

「My bad, it was an unfair question.」

「No, I do not mind.」

Vincent knew the relationship between the two. He understood that it was something he should not support in his position, but as an older brother, he couldn't help but to get annoyed by it.

With the two of them denying their own feelings and having them bottled up at the edge of their hearts, it was natural for him to get irked by it.

After this day, for a while, Rion would be working on extinguishing a new rumor about Vincent. That rumor said that in order to avoid his own punishment he used his own servant as a scapegoat.

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TL's Corner:

The next chapter would be an excursion or a trip separated by two parts, that's why I'll work hard to deliver the two chapters next week. By this time you should've already realized that Rion's battle against the plot would most-likely be always uphill.

In my opinion, the real fight starts after the excursion so please do look forward to it.

Note: I'm mostly only 2 – 4 chapters ahead so don't accept my comments as a fact regarding the story.

# Event : Excursion (First Half)

**Akuyaku Reijo ni Koi Wo Shite Chapter 13 : *“Event: Excursion (First Half)”***

Ever since Vincent came to the Academy, rather than improving, his reputation fell continuously. It was due to the rumors that continued to pop up all the time.

Although Rion had begun to act thoroughly to determine their source, he was not able to arrive at any conclusions. The answer he always got was “I’m not sure, I heard it from someone”.

With such rumors being spread to that degree, surely there was someone carrying ill intent behind the whole matter. He thought he had to, one way or another, find the culprit. But he was still unable to do anything and that made him irritated.

He had a suspect although it was just a guess. However, that person was someone hard to deal with. He kept pondering things that he should do to obtain evidence.

「**…..on. Rion!**」

「…Sir?」

「What are you daydreaming about? I have been asking a question you know?」

「Apologies. What is the matter?…」

「It was about the route of the excursion. Which one do you think is better?」

「Erm…」

In Autumn, the main point of the curriculum was the excursion. Though it was called an excursion, it was far from just going towards a specified place. The students had to determine their route and prepare necessary items beforehand by themselves.

The marching required by that training journey was made extremely easy.

However, demonic beasts that would frequently appear in their path were a real problem. Although those beast were of a kind that could even be injured by normal animals, for students who had almost no combat experience, they were considerably dangerous opponents.

Of course, to guarantee that emergency situations didn't occur, the Academy made certain precautions. However the existence of the danger and precautions was not conveyed to the students.

It was to boost their desire to fulfill their assigned task of reaching their objective using only their own power.

「Have you consulted others?」

「I already did. They have different opinions so I decided to ask Rion.」

「Well then, why not decide by majority vote?」

「Majority deciding on something doesn't necessarily mean that it's the right thing to do. Wasn't you yourself the one who said that?」

「…Indeed.」

It was said to comfort Vincent during the time when his opinion was disregarded by others. Those kinds of things Vincent would always remember.

「You have also said that deciding by the majority should be used only when disputes are settled. 」

「…Yes. I have also said that.」

He said so to defuse Vincent's plans to use the Windhill's influence to suppress opinions opposing him. Although those words were said at a different time with a different meaning, Vincent was properly able to adapt them to the situation at hand, which made Rion slightly surprised.

「Like I said, there's a dispute. To put it down, we want to hear Rion's opinion.」

「…..In what way are the opinions divided?」

「You weren't listening at all, were you?」

「I apologize, sir. I was thinking of a different matter.」

「I guess there's no choice. Well then, I'll explain it again.」

「Understood.」

「There are three routes to the designated point. First would be going around the north flank of the forest. The path led through the mountains, but it was carefully maintained and would be easiest to travel to, even if the distance was the longest.」

Starting with this, Vincent began explaining the problem to Rion carefully.

There were two other routes. The second one would skirt the woods from the south. Although that path was barely maintained, it was much shorter than the northern path.

The last route was to go straight through the forest towards the designated point. Of course, this was the shortest path but the road wasn't maintained at all. Also, this way carried another problem with it.

The chance of encountering demonic beast was incomparably higher compared to the other two routes.

If one considered the risks alone north, south and lastly the middle, would be the order.

That being the case,the natural solution would be just to choose the safest path, but the conversation didn't go that way. Although this assignment was called "excursion", its purpose was to train the students so the dangerous, direct, middle part would be given a higher priority.

Braving the risk and choosing the middle route was the likely outcome.

「Is the opinion divided into three camps?」

「No, into two.」

「North and middle?」

「No. It's middle and south.」

「…Why is the south route popular?」

「North is too simple.」

「I see.」

「Is the south path not good?」

Vincent knew that judging by Rion's way of talking, there was a problem with going south. However, he couldn't figure out why.

「I wouldn't say that. I have only thought that this option is half-baked. I expected that people's opinions would gather around both extremes.」

「Half-baked, huh?」

「Shall we go through the reasons behind the choices? What's the priority for those choosing the middle route?」

「Arriving first.」

「And the south path?」

「…Arriving safely.」

「Those are rather vague. In this exercise isn't the objective "arriving at the destination without anyone missing" ?」

「Something like that.」

「If the objective is this, then the chosen path should be the northern one. Although it's a little long, traveling on a carefully maintained path will be less tiresome.」

「…You're right.」

「The south path not only is the most remote, but to make matters worse the possibility of dropouts happening would appear. I was thinking that there was no reason to choose it.」

「It's as you say.」

**While Rion was speaking he was also paying careful attention to the response of the other students. Their reactions were roughly the same as Vincent's.**

There was hardly anyone in this class who wouldn't do as Vincent told. Not because he was well-received, but because of his family's pedigree. Having him force people to do things would lead to dissatisfaction.

For Vincent's reputation, that was something Rion wanted to avoid the most. That was the reason why he told the young lord that it's important to address the dissidents.

「The choices now are either the northern route or going through the middle. Are there any objections?」

Vincent's question raised hardly any response. This was not because of fear but because people agreed.

「That being the case, we're down to setting priorities. Which one should we put higher?」

「…Erm, having me to decide everything is…」

This was also something Rion was mindful of. He thought that if he was to intrude in such matters, it would also be considered borrowing the influence of the aristocratic house. Such a thing would impact the reputation of Vincent who let it happen.

「We're merely going to use it as reference.」

「…Well then, If we're talking priorities, what is the main objective of the excursion?」

「Objective of the excursion?」

「Yes.」

「…What is it?」

「It might be called excursion, but there's a meaningful reason behind it.」

「Oh? It's about the marching drill, huh?」

「Yes. The excursion is just an imitation of military marching drills. That being

the case, what is the minimum objective of a military march?」

「Arriving at the designated point?」

「It is arriving at the designated point within the time-frame specified.」

「Oh, time-frame, huh? In other words…, Northern route, huh?」

Vincent, after giving it a thought managed to reach the correct answer. He was able to understand that arriving in time was more important than being the first to arrive.

「If I was to be the one to decide, then it would be like that. But of course, arriving faster would be better. However, this is your first excursion. Because the danger that the middle route poses is currently unknown, going straight there wouldn't be the right thing to do in my opinion.」

「I see… You're right.」

In the end, the whole class was in full agreement with Rion. B-class students decided to bypass the forest from the north.

◇◇◇

The very day of the excursion trip. On the carefully maintained road, the B-class students were advancing forward forming a column.

While the B-class chose the northern route, the other classes each chose one of the other two routes respectively. The excursion became neatly separated with one class per route.

「If we manage to estimate the distance and the path properly, we could even advance while running.」

「What are you trying to achieve with running?」

「If we gave it our all, we could arrive at the destination first.」

「That is… Something only Rion can do.」

**Rion had the well-trained body to make it possible. Vincent clearly knew that he, himself, didn't have that.**

「If you trained yourself, sir, surely you would be fine as well.」

「… Rion’s training is too much. I could never go to such absurd lengths.」

「If you continued doing it, you’d get used to it eventually.」

「Before that, I would surely die.」

「Not at all. You would be able to get accustomed to it quickly.」

**Those who didn’t believe Rion’s words were not limited to Vincent, but also included the eavesdropping students along with their own servants. They all realized that Rion’s common sense was slightly off compared to that of a normal person.**

Actually, ever since they departed, Rion ran ahead of the group and returned countless of times. It was obvious he had a considerable endurance since despite all that running he was showing the least signs of tiredness.

As to why Rion kept running ahead like that…

「After crossing the gentle curve ahead, let us take a break. There should be enough space for everyone to sit down.」

「Yeah, let’s do that.」

**It was to search for a proper place to take a break. Although compared to the others this route was considerably easier, they were still diligently taking breaks.**

It was because, in their class, there were also noble lady students. Some of them had never traveled far on foot.

Although for Rion and Vincent the distance was still easy, for those female students it was a hellish exercise that they had never experienced before.

「**So Ariel would be like them as well, huh?**」

Vincent whispered to Rion to prevent others from overhearing.

「… I wonder? In my opinion, milady has a considerable stamina.」

「Why do you think so?」

「During the dance lesson she is able to dance for how many hours straight.」

「Oh that, huh? However, she was able to go so far due to her stubbornness, right?」

「Is that the case? Certainly, she does have that kind of mood about her. However, I wonder what is that stubbornness targeted at?」

「You really are…」

Vincent swallowed the phrase “thick-headed”. He knew the reason behind Ariel’s stubbornness.

It was the numerous『You must be tired』remarks made by Rion which caused her to think that he hated keeping her company in dance.

Every time Rion voiced his anxious inquiries, Ariel’s eyes narrowed. Despite that, she seemed to be truly enjoying herself as his dancing partner.

That was the incident that made Vincent fully aware of his younger sister’s complex female heart.

While he was reminiscing, the roomy resting spot had become visible. It was the place that Rion was talking about.

「The third squad will be on watch duty. The female students should take a break in the center of the group.」

Vincent’s instructions flew towards the students. It was his duty as the commanding officer to lead and organize the entire group.

The male students took a position to surround the female students and their handmaidens. The outer circle of the group was made of the students on guard duty that were watching the surroundings carefully.

Although the movements of the group were rather crude, the situation did somewhat resemble an army.

「Let’s proceed with more care from now on.」

「Is it about the demonic beasts?」

「Yes. Because part of the northern path is covered by trees, the probability of demonic beasts appearing rises. That was written in the Academy briefing materials.」

「Is that so? Well then, we should rest a bit longer and then…」

「We should assume a defensive formation with those who can't fight placed in the middle.」

「Yeah, that's right.」

If Vincent was the commander, then Rion was the adjutant. Although there was a student given the duty of adjutant, because Rion was performing in that role very well, that student left it to him without a word. For that student with a considerably high pedigree, since he didn't need to do the job he didn't want to bother with it. Rion's existence in that group was favorable to him.

After discussing the future plans, Vincent also took a seat. Although he was not really tired, there was still more than half the distance to go. He was taking the break time seriously.

Although he was about to tell Rion to rest as well, he stopped himself seeing the uneasy face his valet was making.

「Did something happened?」

「…If you look at it, are they not making quite a ruckus? 」

「A ruckus? Well, I do not mind at all.」

「Ah no, not the students but…. The forest…」

「Forest?」

「….I didn't mean the sounds…」

Rion whispered to Vincent who was trying to strain his ears. Vincent realizing his mistake, began focusing his attention on probing the surroundings instead.

「…Certainly, it does seem that way.」

「They may be far but they seem to be considerably agitated.」

「Is that demonic beast that strong?」

「Rather than that, they seem to be more numerous compared to expectations.」

「Is that so. We must take precautions as well, huh?」

「Yes」

The sensation that Rion and Vincent were trying to feel was magic. The beings that Rion sensed through the surroundings spirits were moving vigorously. That effect was called resonance.

There were also other students who were able to sense it and they could be seen making anxious faces.

「Just to be safe, let's proceed more carefully. No, let's accurately follow the agreed plan.」

「Yeah. Let's do that.」

Because the B-class chose the safest route, they didn't really have good contingencies in their plans. Although it could be said that they were only doing marching drills, no one understood that it could turn into a battlefield and made plans accordingly.

Vincent, having a much stronger sense of responsibility than other people, started to formulate a strategy and began to give instructions. Even without Rion to think for them, the marching plan formulated by the B-class was considerably good as is.

Enough for them to have confidence no matter what would happen.

However, unfortunately, this confidence would immediately crumble. With the situation beyond all expectations, that plan would not be applicable in any way.

◇◇◇

「Female students! Gather in the center! Male students as well! Don't head out on your own! Anyhow, just think of defending yourselves!」

**The knight wearing a light armor approached the students while shouting.**

The current situation has exceeded the expectation of the students and even the escort knights that secretly followed them along.

「What's the distance!?」

「They'll be visible soon! Their headcount… Is roughly in hundreds!」

「Hundreds of them…?」

**With hundreds of demonic beasts approaching, although the knights escorting the students have stopped hiding and began to act, their facial expressions were grim.**

Although there shouldn't be any strong demonic beasts within the incoming group, their number was still too high, while the escort only numbered two warriors.

「They're just small fries, we will manage somehow! Just don't let them get close to the students!」

「What about having them provide magic support?」

「…Although this situation calls for it, for now, let's just focus on escaping.」

「You mean, just let the students escape ahead?」

「There's no choice. We only have two people here.」

This was the same as saying that their protection was insufficient. Hearing these words, the expression of the other knight turned into despair.

「….Why did this happen!? This was why I told them that two is not enough!」

「What are you saying now? Just steel yourself.」

**The northern route should've been the safest of all. Compared to the other routes, the number of escorts assigned to it was usually small. However, having only two stationed there was too few.**

But there was a reason for this. The students who chose to travel by the middle route belonged to the class attended by the Crown Prince Arnold, Lancelot and Charlotte.

The class that had to be protected the most went with the most dangerous path. Due to that, the majority of knights assigned as escorts concentrated on the middle route. And so the safest route was merely offered a token protection.

But even so, no one saw any problems about it. Normally, the northern route didn't even need to be guarded. However currently, for some reason, numerous demonic beasts were approaching the students.

In number which was unprecedented in light of the past.

「Vincent-sama, let's prepare for retreat.」

「Yeah.」

The voices of the knights were clearly heard by the students. Every one of them knew that the situation was considerably dangerous.

「We will leave this place immediately. Calm down and separate into groups as planned beforehand.」

With Vincent's instructions, the students began to move. The class separated into three large groups. They formed a battle formation in which the female students and their handmaidens were in the center.

When the three large square formations were completed, the first group began to move.

After enough of a gap opened, the next group followed suit. Lastly, the group to which Vincent and Rion belonged set off. This square had no female students nor handmaidens in their ranks. It was the rear guard, in other words, the group tasked with eliminating any demonic beasts that would follow.

「We're retreating!」

Vincent yelled towards the knights.

「Hurry up! They're coming!」

Numerous shadows began showing up from under the tree cover.

They were demonic beasts with a pitch-black exterior. Although they had a body similar to that of a wolf, their build was considerably larger, they were bigger than the knights themselves. It was not a being that could be injured by normal animals.

「Don't tell me, there's hundreds of "that"?」

「Vincent-sama, let's hurry up!」

「Y-Yeah, Retreat!」

Receiving Vincent's command, the rear guard followed after the leading group.

「Prioritize moving in formation! I will verify the situation myself!」

Rion yelled towards the students that were looking back from time to time due to check the situation with the demonic beasts. They were doing such a thing is because they feared that the demonic beasts would be catching up.

Rion who was in the last line halted his retreat and turned towards the knights.

The two of them were slaughtering the demonic beasts one after another. However, the numbers of new foes from the forest just continued to grow. It was clear even to Rion that it was impossible for the escorts to hold.

「….Diane.」

Answering Rion's call, lights gathered around him.

They concentrated on his upwards raised hand. Before long, a large ball of light formed above his palm.

「…Pierce them!!」

**As he swung his hand down, the ball of light launched forth and then separated**

**into numerous water lances. Those flew towards the demonic beasts assaulting the knights.**

Dozens of demonic bodies pierced by the projectiles began falling to the ground. But even so, the number of adversaries didn't seem to be diminishing. It would only buy them a little bit more time.

But that much was fine. Because Rion's objective was not really to help the knights but to buy time for Vincent to escape.

Turning his back to the still fighting knights, Rion followed Vincent. Even though he could hear death cries behind him, he didn't spare a moment to look back.

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# T&E Section:

**Translator's note:**

***Again, I'm sorry for not being able to release two chapters as I said before. It was even delayed, orz. I have no excuses. Anyway it's not much of a cliffhanger, but well the cliff hanger is Chapter 15, and it's a HUGE one.***

**(Peter and Deus) Editors' note:**

***Hello everyone. Since we've been doing this a while we figured out it's about time to get some feedback. What do you think about the style of the translation? Anything you hate or that irritates you to no end? Anything we could do better?***

***Do let us know. Enori's the one doing all the hard work, but finished shape and end result is all on us. We'd like to make it as good possible :]***

*Thanks~~*

# Event : Excursion (Second Half)

**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite Chapter 14:**
***"'Event: Excursion (Second Half)"***

Although Rion only followed well after Vincent's group departed, he was able to catch up to them faster than expected. Even though the situation called for escaping as soon as possible, the group of students halted.

「Is there something wrong?」

「That's…」

The reason the students came to a halt was at the end of Vincent's gaze. One of the girls was sitting on the ground, caressing her foot with a painful facial expression.

「…Is she injured?」

「She seems to have sprained her leg.」

「Well then, please heal her immediately.」

「The healing magic doesn't work.」

Although fractures could be healed, concussions and sprains weren't affected by healing magic. Similarly, things like cold and food poisoning could not be healed either.

Although the reason for this wasn't known, it was still an accepted fact.

「…We must hurry. It is likely, that the demonic beasts have started following us by now.」

「That's…」

Rion only shook his head as an answer to Vincent's inquiry. Knowing the meaning of that gesture, Vincent's face turned grim.

「Sir, please make a decision.」

「Decision?」

「To save many lives, you must have the resolve to sacrifice a few.」

「…You mean leave the injured behind?」

The thing that Vincent hesitated to say… Was brought into his mouth.

「N-Noo! Please do not leave me behind!」

Hearing Vincent's words the face of the female student changed colors as she began to panic. Being left behind in a situation like this, meant death. Even she knew that…

「I beg of you! Please don't leave me behind!」

「But…」

「Please! I will do anything! Please help me!!」

The surrounding students and their servants kept silent while the girl pleaded desperately. There were even a few who turned their faces away. The final decision was now forced onto Vincent.

Being left with such a huge call, he began to break down under the pressure.

「There is also another option.」

In that moment Rion offered another option.

「That being?」

「Please give me the order.」

「The order? What order?」

「To suppress the pursuing demonic beasts.」

「……」

The sacrifice was changed from the injured female student to Rion. Vincent could not come to a decision easily.

「Please understand your own position. Vincent-sama is currently the commanding officer of the group.」

「Even so…」

「Even if we leave the injured here, it is still likely that the demonic beasts will still catch up. To shake off the pursuit a rear guard is clearly needed.」

「That is the duty of this platoon.」

「The meaning of being a rear guard is to confine the pursuing demonic beasts by fighting them. This is not the place for Vincent-sama to risk his life in.」

「However!」

「Have you forgotten your duty as the member of a marquess house!?」

It might be called unfair but for Rion to convince Vincent, this argument had to be used. These words could not be refuted by Vincent who was clearly aware of his responsibility as the heir.

「…….」

The silence was the best answer that Vincent came up with.

「The time for Vincent-sama to risk his life is not today but will come in the future. As long as you understand that, please make a decision as the heir of the marquess house.」

「Rion…」

「I am only advising to order me to suppress the demonic beast. This is not synonymous with ordering me to die.」

「…Is that so? You're right.」

Even Vincent knew that Rion only said that in order to placate his feelings. And because he knew, he chose to reply as follows.

「Well then, your orders sir?」

「Suppress them… Suppress the demonic beasts.」

「Understood.」

「And…」

「…Yes?」

「And make sure to come back alive.」

「Understood. I'll make it so.」

「I can only lend you this. It should offer you a bit of help.」

Vincent gave him the sword hanging from his waist. Rion accepted it respectfully and immediately turned his back on Vincent.

「Please hurry. They'll arrive here soon.」

This was not the time to indulge in sentimentality.

「…Yeah. Well then, I'll be waiting.」

「Yes.」

Vincent's orders flew immediately afterwards. He instructed others to carry the injured female while dividing the group into two and marching forward. One of the groups was tasked to be the rear guard after Rion.

Although it was irrelevant with Rion remaining in this place, he was still happy with the caution that Vincent exhibited.

After confirming that the students were gone, Rion took off his eye-patch. As if replacing the departed children the presence of the pursuing demonic beasts began to be felt. Rion assumed a combat stance.

He, who have always longed for a desperate battle, had a wide smile on his face.

This was Rion's true self.

If the blue eye, looking calm as water's surface, held Ryou's reason behind it, then the crimson one burned with Flay's flame of hatred. The existence of Rion was a mix of those two dispositions.

Currently, as he was facing battle, Rion's self was more inclined towards belligerent Flay. Being able to use the strength, he managed to acquire, this freely lit a fire in his heart.

「…Sarah.」

As if answering Rion's call, bright light gathered around him. As it began to move restlessly in his surroundings Rion could only offer it a bitter smile.

「Don't be so mad. Red eye would stand out too much and I must not appear

conspicuous.」

Hearing that the light became even more agitated. Like it was not satisfied with the excuse.

「Rejoice. This time, there's no need to hold back. We rarely get this kind of opportunity.」

With this, the lights seemed to calm down. It was clearly able to understand Rion's words.

「Look, they've arrived. There's no time for sulking.」

Demonic shapes began to appear in Rion's field of vision in steadily increasing numbers. Although they arrived in significant number, instead of charging recklessly they halted their advance at a considerable distance away, as if remembering his magical assault earlier.

「Sarah, you will be the one attacking. Burn the enemies to a cinder. I'll leave the defense to you Diane.」

The light in Rion's surroundings begun to take the form of a dragon blazing brightly and in contrast, a lump of transparent, nearly visible, water appeared to stand beside him.

The appearance of the two formed according to Ryou's memories of a fire spirit and water spirit.

「…Well then, let's go.」

Drawing the sword that Vincent lent him, Rion advanced.

As if taking that for a signal, the demonic beast had charged immediately.

He swung the sword in an arc in front of him aiming at the demonic beast that leapt at his body. The sword split them in half.

「…There's no resistance… This is not a normal sword.」

The sword was cutting the demonic beasts like paper and Rion was surprised by its sharpness.

But it was the sword that the doting marquess gave to his heir, Vincent. There was no way it would be an average blade.

「With this, I can go at them seriously.」

While Rion had been cutting the demonic beast with his sword another one flared up to be devoured by fire. Just like that, two had died.

Although the damage was still insignificant compared to the overall number of assailants, Rion felt considerably less resistance.

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Vincent who advanced after leaving Rion behind encountered yet another trouble. Compared to the situation they were in when they were escaping, this problem was absurd.

「I can't believe it! How can you do such a despicable thing!?」

The person yelling at him was Maria.

(PN*: PR got triggered again by Maria
TN*: I even unconsciously typed "Shut the hell up" instead of "Stop it/Cut it out" on the latter parts because of her.)

What awaited Vincent, who hurried forward, was not one of the preceding group from class B, but the students of A-class.

The leading pack of his class' three separate detachments was able to arrive at the designated point without even encountering a demonic beast.

Arriving at the designated point, they related the situation to the teachers and asked for reinforcements, but the one who answered their plea were not the teachers nor the knights, but some of the students from the A-class.

Of course, one of those students was Maria. Arnold, Lancelot, and Charlotte who were pulled along her whims came as well. And when those three made a move, others would be obliged to follow.

As a result, with the VIPs moving to rescue the B-class, teachers and knights had no choice but to get involved as well.

Almost all of the people who were at the designated point were now backtracking along the northern path.

Although they expected to meet wounded on they way, before this worry managed to grow further, they met Vincent's group.

Maria who saw Vincent immediately came to rebuke him. This fact was incomprehensible to Vincent. Although he was able to guess why he was being scolded, the fact it was done by a commoner female student defied all his reason.

「To think that you can conveniently sacrifice others to save yourself! And you still call yourself an aristocrat!?」

He couldn't understand the meaning behind her words. After all, it was because that he was an aristocrat that he chose to overrule his personal feelings and withdraw.

「Someone like you has no right to stand above people!」

This as well. It was because he stood above others, that he chose to ignore his personal feelings and made a decision that was for the benefit of the group. It's because he was considering his position that he chose to escape with everyone.

If Vincent wasn't a person of an aristocratic background and shared Rion's life circumstances, he would stay behind and fight with him.

With Vincent not able to comprehend her words, he was stunned into silence and just stood there receiving her admonishment.

「Say something!」

Staying silent was his form of protest but Maria showed no signs of stopping.

However, Vincent wouldn't let a situation like this continue indefinitely.

「Would you stop already?」

「What did you say!?」

「How long do you even plan to carry on with this!? I don't have the luxury to humour you forever!」

「Such hubris!」

「What hubris!? You do not make any sense!」

「That attitude of yours is so stuck up! Why don't you admit your mistakes for once!?」

Although Maria kept rebuking the no longer silent Vincent, she was looking

happy.

「Like I told you, I do not have the time for that!」

「Then, when will you!?」

「Cut it out already! Even at this moment, Rion is fighting there all alone!」

「That's… Eh?」

「I have to ask for reinforcements right away! I have no time to talk to someone like you!」

「It's too late. He has died already.」

「That is something you selfishly assumed! I believe in him! Anyway, I can't stay here and accompany you! I have to hurry up and ask for help! 」

Shoving Maria aside, Vincent yelled in the direction of the teachers in the back.

「Well that's that. Let's hurry.」

「Yeah, please hurry up.」

「Then, how many demonic beasts were there?」

One of the escort knights inquired Vincent.

「The figure that I saw had exceeded hundreds. But there might be more.」

「Wha!!? What kind of demonic beasts!?」

The knights were clearly shaken by that reply. It seems they did not expect the situation to be this bad.

「They look like pitch black wolves, but their bodies are considerably larger than an adult human.」

「….A Mother Wolf? No way. Mother Wolves were not supposed to appear in this forest.」

「I don't care about the demonic beasts! Just hurry with the reinforcements!」

However, the teachers and the escort knights didn't comply with that demand. On the contrary, they pulled away, formed a group and started conversing among themselves.

「What are you doing!? I'm telling you to hurry up with the relief!」

「W-Wait a minute.」

「Like I'd wait!」

「If they were really mother wolves, relief is meaningless.」

「What did you say!?」

「That's a demonic beast which shouldn't have appeared in this place, in addition, there's over a hundred of them. Rather than thinking of rescue, we must figure out why have they appeared here.」

「What will happen to Rion then!?」

「He has already died.」

「…What?」

「It is not something a mere valet could stand against. If they were able to follow up, the escort knights holding them back might have perished as well. These demonic beasts are that strong.」

「No way…」

「Do you understand?」

「…Rion promised that he wouldn't die.」

「That's…. That kind of promise is meaningless.」

「It was a promise with me! There's no way Rion would break it!」

「Anyhow! There's no telling when will these demonic beasts appear again. While we are preparing to intercept them, please return to your assigned place.」

The teacher who said that did not look at Vincent anymore. Although Crown Prince Arnold showed some hesitation as he met the teacher's gaze, in the end, he nodded in agreement.

Then it was decided that they would move in together.

According to the instructions of the knights, the students would form a group and move out. The only people to remain behind would be the knights assigned as a rear guard and Vincent.

「If you do not retreat as well, you might lose your life.」

「…But Rion is…」

「It would be better to give up. If hundreds of Mother Wolves really were to assault, even we would lose our lives. It is that strong an opponent.」

「What if magic is used?」

「The chance of beating them would increase, but what if the spells fail? If students under our care lost their lives due to that, our lives would be forfeit as well in result.」

「…That's true.」

Even if they were knights, their position was still that of a retainer of the royal family. If the Crown Prince Arnold and the three other children of marquess families were to be put in harm's way, the repercussions would be heavy indeed. It's not unlikely for it to result in a capital punishment.

And… Hearing those words, even Vincent would choose not to remain here any longer. Leaving that place, he turned his back towards the knights and departed.

「…Were you waiting, sir?」

A voice rose behind his back. Even if he didn't see the speaker, Vincent knew to whom that voice belonged to.

「Rion…」

「If that were to be the case, that wouldn't be very admirable. In order to avoid danger, you should be escaping as fast as possible.」

Rion's condition was still unchanged, putting Vincent's worries in question. That sight calmed Vincent down and made him regain his composure.

「I was just about to do that now. You only stopped me with your call.」

「I see, I apologize sir.」

「What happened to the demonic beasts?」

「I was able to deal with them somehow. Because of the two knights that were escorting us, I did not really have to do anything.」

「…Is that so? Then I must offer my thanks to those two.」

There's no way that the two knights survived. It was because he knew that they were defeated that Rion decided to stay.

Even knowing that Vincent still went along with Rion's tale.

There were other people here than just them two. Vincent played along because he deduced that the truth was not something Rion wanted the knights to hear.

「Well then, what should we do now?」

「Let's reunite with the other students. I don't know what to do after that as well.」

「That's right, isn't it. Well then, shall we proceed?」

「Yeah.」

With this Vincent and Rion attempted to leave the place as well but..

「You! Please wait a bit!」

Rion was called by a knight. That was to be expected, though.

「Do you require something?」

「The demonic beasts… What happened to them?」

「Would it be fine to say they escaped? Roughly all of them left in the direction of the forest.」

「Roughly? Can you elaborate?」

「Don't the demonic beasts partake in cannibalism? There were several demonic beasts in there that took the remains of their fellows.」

「…There were still some remaining, huh?」

If that's the situation, then conducting investigations on the scene would be difficult.

「Their numbers weren't really high and they did not show any sign of attacking again. That is also the reason why I was able to escape safely.」

「Is that so…」

However, the danger that their presence possessed still remained in place for the knights. But this was within Rion's expectations. After this, he let himself be carried by the flow of conversation.

「Is it already fine for me to go? I was able to return safely, but I had just made it through a life-or-death experience.」

「That's right. I understand how you feel. Proceed to the assembly point.」

Judging that the immediate peril disappeared based on Rion's report, the knights themselves had decided to leave the place too.

After all, even if they were knights, they didn't want to die.

After that, because impending nightfall raised a risk of having to travel in the dark, their preparations to leave the forest were postponed till the morning.

With their vigilance heightened, the remaining journey was undertaken with extreme caution. It might be fine to say that because of that they were able to leave the area without any further incidents.

Thus this event reached its conclusion.

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Numerous weeks later.

In the headquarters of the knightly order, the Knight Captain was greatly perplexed by the report of his subordinates regarding the incident of demonic beasts appearing during the Excursion. The investigations of that event were now completed and the results were…

「In other words, the students following the central route needlessly fired consecutive spells provoking the surrounding demonic beasts by accident and they attacked the students in the northern route which was closest to them?」

「Yes, sir. That's correct.」

「How did you arrive at this conclusion?」

「Well, it was the result of the investigations.」

「Sigh, what kind of investigations? There's no telling what can provoke demonic beasts, don't you agree?」

Knight Captain didn’t want to acknowledge a report like this.

「The truth is, sir, there was an underground cave near the central route.」

「Underground cave, you say?」

「Yes. Although, as expected, we couldn’t inspect the whole forest but the cave system is of considerable scope and runs the length of the forest.」

「So what about that cave?」

「It seems Mother Wolves were inhabiting that place. There were other things as well but either way, they were only bunch of demonic beasts that were not supposed to be in the forest.」

「…In other words?」

「Magic destroyed one part of the cavern and rest of the system was under continuous assault. Because of that, the demonic beasts fled that place and their exit path happened to be very close to the northern path.」

「Those accidents conveniently, no, inconveniently came one after another, huh?」

「We were able to confirm the exit paths from the part of the cavern that crumbled within the middle route’s vicinity. Investigating that place further, we were able to confirm the presence of corpses belonging to demonic beasts that you would not normally see in the forest. Of course, Mother Wolves’ as well.」

「…That’s circumstantial evidence.」

Although the result was strongly supported by that circumstantial evidence, the Knight Captain was still not able to accept the report.

「However, that evidence is pretty strong.」

「Well then, do you know who are the students that caused the collapse? Do you want to push the responsibility for this incident onto them?」

He had to be clearer since his subordinate could not understand immediately. The root cause of this incident were the actions of the Crown Prince and marquess houses heirs. The Knight Captain didn’t want to be the person to report such a thing.

「That's…」

「Mother Wolves were found inhabiting the depths of the forest. For some unknown reason, those beasts started assaulting the students on the northern path. That is all we found out, understood?」

「….Understood, sir.」

「Well then, this investigation is concluded.」

「There's also one other thing.」

Even though the Knight Captain was about to close the meeting, his subordinate had another thing to say.

「What is it?」

The Knight Captain, who wanted to put an end to this conversation already, was visibly fed up by now.

「When we were investigating the northern route, we were able to confirm that numerous demonic beasts were killed.」

「Is that so… So those two had that much skill in them, huh?」

「Half of those monsters were killed by magic.」

「What?」

「Were those two capable of using magic?」

「…If they were, they wouldn't have remained just knights in the first place.」

「That's right, isn't it.」

There were knights able to use magic in their ranks. Not just aristocrats, there were also those blessed with special talents. Those, regardless of their social status, had a considerably high position within the order.

Being able to fight with magic would be able to demonstrate that much of strength.

「If those two weren't responsible, then who?」

「There is one possibility but it involves circumstantial evidence as well.」

「…Don't tell me it's about that infamous failure of an aristocrat?」

「Is it fine to say such a thing?」

「You heard nothing. However, is it really him?」

「No, it is not. The likely one is the valet that serves his House. It seems he was the only person connected to the aristocrats that remained behind to fight.」

「…Is that valet of noble origin?」

「No, he is a commoner.」

「Even though he can use magic, he remains a commoner?」

「Yes. However we suspect it is because he has yet to undergo the coming of age, I was thinking he's not far off.」

「…Impossible. Just because he is able to use a little bit of magic, there's no way a commoner's child can defeat a mother wolf. There must be some kind of mistake.」

After hearing that the valet was still a child, the Captain rejected the report.

There were also those who could use magic among the commoners. However even if they were gifted with talent, without proper training, they wouldn't be anywhere near decent. Not good enough to be used in battle.

Or so ran the conventional wisdom. The Knight Captain was not someone that would reject common sense.

「Is it fine to leave it like that?」

「I don't mind. There's no way I can report a wild speculation like that.」

「Is that so…」

With this, the truth was buried in the dark. To Rion, it was something both fortunate and unlucky.

After the Excursion incident, another rumor about Vincent spread around. It said that he was the worst kind of person that would leave his valet behind in order to save his own life.

This rumor made Rion question the nature of this world, he started to doubt it as a whole.

**Translator's Corner:**

I apologize to those who kept refreshing yesterday. In the end it was still released on the next morning lol. I think the whole plot has just started at this point so please look forward to the next chapters.

Again, for comments, suggestions and requests please go to the contact us section.

# There Is Something Odd About This World

**Akuyaku Reijou no Koi wo Shite – Chapter 15 –**
***"There Is Something Odd About This World"***

***In front of him, numerous books were piled up. Rion requested some free time from Vincent and secluded himself in the library in order to search for something.***

***He was roughly done by now, but no matter how he searched, he wasn't able to find anything new, only more things that supported his suspicions.***

***Knowing that, Rion stopped reading new books and put all his strength into thinking deeply instead.***

***There was something he couldn't understand at all about the gossip that spread after the excursion trip. He couldn't understand why the rumor that said "Vincent abandoned his valet in order to save himself" was so badly received.***

***Ryou, who was from another world, and even Flay, who only came from the slum area, were devoid of common knowledge. Rion, having enough self-awareness, was able to drill some of it into his head after working as a valet for a while.***

***He put special focus on studying about valets and their use for their masters and he thought he had a complete understanding of that.***

***According to that general knowledge of Rion, Vincent's action was proper behavior for an aristocrat and there should've been no room for criticism. Thinking that his knowledge might have been lacking, he secluded himself to read more books on the subject, but in the end, he was only able to arrive at the conclusion that the action they had taken was correct.***

***If that was the case, then another question resurfaced. There had been numerous times in the past when detestable rumors against Vincent had been circulating. Feeling that the gossip going around had been arbitrary, Rion had set his sights on the possible perpetrators.***

*The only one with the capability for such actions was Lancelot of the House Aqusmea.*

*It was strange for Lancelot to see Vincent as his enemy to such an extent. Although that incident during the trial ceremony would be enough to earn some anger, that should not be enough for outright enmity at this point. The connection to Erwin, Vincent's step brother could be a factor, but currently, Rion had no way to investigate that possibility.*

*Besides, the source of Lancelot's anger towards Vincent was not really important. What was important was that it was impossible for Lancelot who is also a member of a marquess family to spread this particular kind of rumor.*

*Lancelot and Vincent had received the same education. It was unthinkable that Lancelot could consider the current rumor as something bad. Of course, there was also the possibility that the person himself thought otherwise, but he was not an idiot to the point of expecting other aristocratic lordlings to share the same opinion.*

*This led to one conclusion. At the very least, the current set of rumors was not spread by Lancelot. Well, who was behind it then? One person easily came to Rion's mind.*

*Like Lancelot, that person saw Vincent as an enemy for unfathomable reasons. It was Maria Theodore whose attitude towards Vincent was even stranger than Lancelot's.*

*No matter how one thought about it Maria's willingness to disparage Vincent despite her social status was very odd. So far he brushed off that impertinent attitude despite being able to retaliate if he felt like it. She might have the Crown Prince Arnold's and Lancelot's backing, but her taking action to aggravate the situation, even more, was incomprehensible.*

*Furthermore, although her behavior was clearly akin to that of a small person borrowing the authority of others, it seemed that the girl herself was thinking that her actions were just even though her accusations had always been unfair.*

*The option that she was ignorant of the ways of the world was not possible. Even Flay, who had been living in the slums, knew that one must not disobey*

*an aristocrat. There was no way that her parents while sending her to attend the Royal Academy, wouldn't have told her that too.*

*That being the case, the question of what was wrong with that woman raised dark feelings within Rion's heart.*

*Not only he and Flay, but even Ryou could confirm that the words of Maria were unfair.*

*And that her thoughts seemed not to be rooted in this world's mentality but in one from the other world that Ryou had lived in. A female, who had the same line of thought as Ryou, in other words, someone from another world who retained her memories.*

*Rion couldn't deny that there could be other existences similar to him. There was no need to deny it either.*

*But if Maria is indeed that kind of existence, then, according to Ryou's knowledge, there was one more possibility. One that Rion wanted to deny at all cost.*

*His heart began to throb faster at the thought and he attempted to slow it down with numerous deep breaths. This seemed to work and his feelings became calmer.*

*He decided that rather than losing his mind over maybes, the time has come to take action and confirm what was going on. Rion slowly stood up from his seat.*

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*Maria Theodore. According to the records, she was an outstanding student who ranked second to the Crown Prince. There were also rumors circulating that her magical prowess exceeded Charlotte's, Lancelot's and even Arnold's.*

*The fact that a commoner surpassed the prince's talent for magic was something that wouldn't usually be accepted. These things were only discussed in the shadows, though, and magical aptitude was not something that could be easily compared. But even so, it was a fact that her talent in magic was not something that you wouldn't expect from a person of her social status.*

*Only aristocratic bloodlines carried talent. In a world where this was a fact, her existence was something out of place.*

*Also, she might formally be a commoner, but her background was rather complicated. Originally, she was an orphan that was adopted by the current baronet Theodore as a child. The reason for adoption was her lovely appearance and talent.*

*The reason why they were able to discover her talent at such a young age seemed to be her black hair and blue eyes which apparently made it obvious.*

*It seemed that heredity-disregarding black hair on a person was a proof that they would excel in magic. No matter how he investigated, Rion was not able to find out why that was. It looked like a legend. The deep cerulean eyes of hers were also a proof of her affinity to the water attribute. Rion knew that already.*

*If black hair really indicated that someone was talented in magic, then at the very least this applied to Rion too, but it was not something for him to be happy about. He didn't want to stand out after all. Fortunately, thanks to it not being a widely accepted fact, Rion's surroundings never made a clamor about it.*

*Anyhow, Maria's talent was able to exceed even the high expectations of her adoptive parents. She displayed a surprising level of intelligence ever since she was a child and probably thanks to the enthusiastic tutelage of her parents, she was able to show her talent in magic from a young age too. Her already lovely appearance improved even more and as a result, little adorable Maria had turned into a beauty.*

*Then she enrolled in the Royal Academy with the burden of her parent's expectation on her shoulders.*

*If Maria managed to have her talent displayed and recognized by the public, then this would create an opportunity for a life peerage family to be recognized as hereditary nobles.*

*When he finished reading the reports about the aristocratic houses made for Vincent's preparations, Rion broke into a deep sigh.*

*Unfortunately, the contents looked roughly as he expected.*

*It only reinforced the results of his investigations in the Royal Academy. Being gifted with beauty and talent, Maria, who was like a higher existence, had many admirers but consequently many opponents as well*

*It's easy to tell that the ones who admire her are the male students and that she was a focus of the intense animosity of the female students. This as well was as he expected.*

*It seemed she was subjected to frequent chastisements from the female student body as a result of terrible jealousy. However, Maria didn't look disheartened by that. She bravely put up with all the nasty treatment, no matter how bad it got.*

*She was supported in this by Lancelot and recently by Crown Prince Arnold, who suddenly closed his distance to her. The two protected Maria in one way or another. That as well was fuelling the vicious circle of female students' jealousy, but for the three of them, it was something irrelevant.*

*The Salon which was supposed to be exclusively for upper echelons of society now became their place to relax with Charlotte included.*

*Although they did it so she wouldn't be subjected to harassment, but because she wasn't supposed to be in there, it was having the opposite effect. For them to not realize such a thing, they must have really been engrossed by Maria.*

*So just who the hell was Maria Theodore? Rion kept thinking about it. He was able to confirm his suspicions but despite that, he tried to completely deny his conclusions.*

*He refused to acknowledge his suspicions again and again, but the astounding possibility still remained. Moreover, that was the only possibility that wasn't ruled out, so in the end, Rion had to resolve himself and face it.*

*In the end, his conclusion was— that this world was not an ordinary parallel world. He feared that it was likely, that this world was a game and Maria was its protagonist. And she, aware of that fact, was acting accordingly to her game knowledge.*

*If that was all, then he wouldn't mind. Even if she conquered the Crown Prince and other young lords, and even if she wanted to indulge herself in such*

*situations he still wouldn't mind. However, there was a reason why Rion could never let it end that way.*

*In otome games, besides the capture targets, there were also villain characters that would hinder the protagonist. Judging from the situation, it was likely that Vincent was one of those villains, and following the usual conventions, he was probably the stepping stone that would help the protagonist stand out.*

*And that would make the fiancée of the Crown Prince Arnold, Ariel —- just by thinking about it, flames of hatred started to rise in Rion's heart. Rion would never permit anything that would sadden Ariel.*

*Even if that something was the protagonist of this world.*

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「*For Rion himself to invite me out. How wonderful!*」

「*Maria-sama looked genuinely worried about me during the excursion incident. I cannot possibly keep ignoring such a thing forever.*」

*Rion replied with a smile, while Maria seemed to enjoy herself. He was hiding his true intentions splendidly.*

「*I think it would be nice if you talked to me in a less reserved manner.*」

*She replied slightly inclining her head to one side with eyes upturned. Many would probably find such a gesture lovely to behold.*

「*This is how I normally talk, so it is easier for me.*」

「*Even if that's the case. At the very least, the name…*」

「*Name?*」

「*Just Maria would be fine.*」

「*I can't possibly do such a thing. I am not even a fellow student, merely a valet of House Windhill.*」

「*However, I am a commoner too.*」

「*…If the memory does not fail me, you are a member of a baronet family, are*

*you not?」*

*「T-That's right. However, a life peer is not really recognized as a noble.」*

*It was unusual to hear these kinds of things directly from someone like Maria. What was normal was for one at baronet level to want to be somehow recognized as an aristocrat.*

*「That's right, however, that is only from the viewpoint of a hereditary noble, for a commoner like me, it is still a house with a peerage.」*

*「Is that so?」*

*「Yes.」*

*「But you know…」*

*It seems that for Maria, being recognized as coming from a noble house was not very desirable. Although Rion didn't know why would that be, he lodged that information at the corner of his mind. His current objective was to obtain any possible information about Maria.*

*「…I understand. In that case, would calling you by Maria-san suffice?」*

*「The -san is… No, that's fine, isn't it! Right, that's fine!」*

*Maria broke into a dazzling smile. As a result, even Rion, who did not hold favorable opinion towards the female gender, ended up with a startled expression on his face. Every time odd feelings like those gushed up from within his heart, Rion switched personalities. Although he wasn't able to completely change the consciousness, just by switching between Ryou and Flay, he was able to mitigate the effect.*

*The thing that helped to reduce was the influence of Maria's charm. Although he didn't really know whether there was charming magic or something else occurring, he was able to notice it having some kind of effect on his heart.*

*Only because he could contain his heart from a third party perspective he was able to prevent it from taking hold.*

*And Maria's charm, being able to impact Rion with his high resistance to emotional influences, was clearly a frighteningly powerful force.*

*Although he understood that it might be one of the special powers granted to a protagonist, given its actual power, he wondered if there really was a need to make it so strong.*

*He allowed himself to indulge in the pointless thought that, perhaps, this game was actually ridiculously boring.*

*「Well then, where are we going?」*

*「Eh?」*

*「Huh?」*

*「Ah, I apologize. I haven't really given it a thought.」*

*「I-I see. You haven't made any plans prior to inviting me, huh?」*

*She probably thought that plans for a date should come from the boy. She wasn't really wrong. It was just that Rion wasn't thinking of this meeting as a date.*

*「No, I haven't. But if we're at it, shall we go to a shop that I know?」*

*「A shop that Rion-kun knows? I wonder what kind of shop that is?」*

*「It's a shop that serves delicious sweets.」*

*「Ah, that is nice! I've been craving for delicious sweets recently.」*

*[ TL Note : "sweets" here and in the rest of the conversation was written in English in the raw text.*

*ED Note : Chief Editor-san pointed out chapter 9(Rion seducing maids chapter) had Rion talking about desserts, not sweets, so it should not be confused with.]*

*Maria's response was perfect. It was the best payoff for the risk Rion took in this conversation. This world didn't use the word "Sweets" to describe confectionaries. There could be no mistake, even the servants back in the mansion did not know it. Maria, having understood, clearly must have had the knowledge from Ryou's world.*

*That suspicion was thus confirmed.*

*Rion decided to close the distance to Maria he maintained so far.*

*In reality, he inwardly desired to kill her already without hesitation, but he made himself stop that train of thought. It was because of Ryou's doubts on whether protagonists were so easy to kill in the first place.*

*With this world being a game and Maria its protagonist, the whole reality was warped in her favor. It was was a phenomenon that could be called "plot armor".*

*In truth, Rion was wondering if the rumors regarding Vincent, were also somehow a result of this.*

*Anyhow, it was unthinkable to kill the protagonist of a game with plot armor present. It would be good if this was a game with possible bad ends where protagonist dies, but right now Rion was unable to tell what kind of game this was, and even if he was, there was no way for Ryou, who had never played games of this particular genre, to know the details of this particular one.*

*Well then, how should he proceed?*

*The first option would be to hinder her conquest, but Maria probably knew everything about the routes, having the knowledge of this game. The other option would be, at the very least, to prevent her from advancing towards the route that was inconvenient for Rion.*

*That meant preventing her from conquering Crown Prince Arnold, who was the fiancé of Ariel.*

*If this worked, Ariel would not become a rival character. Although she wouldn't really become totally unrelated, the importance of her role would diminish greatly.*

*To make this a reality, Rion decided to get closer to Maria.*

*They went to the shop Rion visited numerous times before. Vincent's purveyor shop. For Vincent, who was very particular about his desserts, only the most delicious ones should be given to him.*

「*Oh my, welcome to our shop.*」

*The shop assistant, being well acquainted with Rion, approached and*

*greeted him.*

*「Today I'm here on personal business, there is no need for that kind of greeting.」*

*「Personal business? A-Ah, no…. but….」*

*After seeing Maria behind Rion, the shop assistant was able to deduce his purpose, but for some reason, she was still rather inarticulate.*

*「Since it's a personal visit, I think you won't mind me coming with another person right?」*

*To Rion, that attitude behind the shop assistant's inquiries brought a feeling of discomfort.*

*「Yes, that is a matter of course, but….」*

*「Can we take one of the empty seats?」*

*The shop attendant, still about to ask something, was cut off by Rion. He didn't want her to have any strange speculations about his relationship with Maria.*

*「…Yes. Please come in.」*

*Right after that reply, Rion immediately went towards a vacant table. Doing so, in turn, attracted the curiosity of other customers.*

*With him wearing an eyepatch on his effeminate face, and the beauty of Maria in his company taking people aback, there was no way for the two to be inconspicuous.*

*Although Rion was already used to the unpleasant stares from the surroundings, the ones he was currently subjected to had a different feel to them and made him feel awkward.*

*But upon arriving at their table, Rion thought that after coming this far, there was no merit in paying them any mind and he erased the feeling from his consciousness.*

*「This shop has a really nice mood to it.」*

*「Does it? Well, beautiful things are beautiful. It's a high-class shop on its*

*own after all.*」

「*Really?*」

「*Contrary to expectations, due to my position I only know these kinds of shops. After all, I don't have to shop for my personal needs.*」

「*Don't tell me you do not even get breaks?*」

「*There are no fixed break periods. However, when I really need one, it is usually granted, so I find that arrangement sufficient.*」

「*Is that so? Rion-kun is an orphan, right?*」

「*…Who did you hear that from?*」

「*Lancelot.*」

「*Who did Lancelot-sama hear it from?*」

「*That's… Are you angry?*」

「*Do excuse me, Vincent-sama was the only one who was supposed to know of my origins, so I simply wondered how did this information travel around..*」

「*I see. It seems Lancelot had heard it from Erwin-kun.*」

「*Oh, so that was the case. Is Maria-san acquainted with Erwin-sama?*」

「*I met him once. Lancelot organized a tea party at his place and I met him there.*」

「*So that's how it was.*」

*It was truly easier to gather information from Maria. Was she not aware of the current turmoil inside the House Windhill, or perhaps did she know, but simply didn't care enough to hide the relevant information?*

*The graveness of this revelation depended on which of the two was true. If it was the latter, then that would be a huge problem for Vincent.*

「*I have also heard about other things.*」

「*Would you please elaborate?*」

「*Were you not subjected to a very cruel treatment?*」

*「…To this extent?」*

*If it was just her knowing about Rion being an orphan, then it was fine. But if she even knew about the heterochromatic eyes, then that would be a problem. If it was discovered that his valet carries heterochromia, more malicious rumors would circulate about Vincent.*

*「That's right. I heard you were even being called a pet. Is that not cruel? For them to treat a human being as a pet.」*

*「Eh, so you meant that?」*

*Why was a matter from so long ago brought up by Maria? It was so unexpected that Rion replied inadvertently.*

*「Eh?」*

*「Ah, apologies. It's just that it never really bothered me. In result of all this, my life was spared after all.」*

*「That's just them tricking you. All people have the fundamental right to live.」*

*「Fundamental right?」*

*「That's correct. Even Rion-kun has it. Having the right to live is something obvious. Because of that, I think that demanding a favor for such a thing is unfair.」*

*「…I see.」*

*As expected, Maria's argument was really incomprehensible to Rion. Even Ryou felt like that. Though he knew what she meant, he had no idea why such an issue was brought up by her here.*

*「I… Want to be Rion-kun's strength. I don't know what I can do alone, but if we can gather everyone's power, I'm sure it would amount to something.」*

*Maria said this, while intently staring into his eyes with a serious face. Before he knew it, her hands were already clasping his.*

*Her unrestrainedly assertive approach was bewildering to him.*

*「Erm… For the time being, shall we place an order?」*

*「…Ah, w-we should, shouldn't we?」*

*Not knowing how to react, Rion decided to change the topic. Unfortunately for him, it was already too late.*

*The shop attendant taking Rion's order looked very worried as she interrupted their conversation.*

*「Uhm…, I'm sorry, but she seems to be angry…」*

*「Angry?」*

*「I think that person seems to be quite angry…」*

*「What are you talking about?」*

*「Like I said..」*

*Moving his line of sight towards the place the shop attendant was being conscious of, he saw…*

*「…No way.」*

*The figure of Ariel, with her arms trembling, standing there with a fearsome smile on her face.*

*[ ED Note: And now please join us in prayer for the late valet Rion. May his soul rest in peace ^_^ ]*

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*sound effects dandandan*
*HnM TC Corner!~*

*Much apologies to being late (dejavu)*

*As I have said before this is one hell of a cliff hanger, however, we are sorry but you might have to endure it for a little longer. Things have gotten rough for us and the HnM group have decided to take a month break from releasing chapters.*

*We apologize for this, please bear with us.*

*Hint: Press CTRL+A*

# The Resolve to Defy the World

**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 16 – *"The Resolve to Defy the World"***

「Please, excuse me for a bit!」

After yelling to Maria in panic, Rion hurriedly left his seat and headed to Ariel's table. Eyes of his lady only kept staring at him.

「Uhm….., You have come to visit the Academy milady? 」

Although he had nothing to be guilty of, being subjected to Ariel's scowl always made Rion very nervous.

「Yes. Someone left the mansion, so my days have turned tedious. Perhaps, am I a …Hindrance?」

「How could that ever be….」

「First, sit down.」

「I am just a valet, I would not presume to sit with milady.」

「Sit with me? I only told you to sit down.」

「…Ah, so you did.」

Rion recognized that his intuition became dull due to not confronting Ariel's fury in a long time. When she demanded he sit down, she did not actually refer to the chair but to the floor.

He immediately assumed a seiza form on the ground in front of Ariel.

**[ TL Note : For those that don't know what it is : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seiza ]**

「Closer.」

「At once, milady.」

After he moved closer, as ordered, Ariel reached with her hands and pinched Rion's cheeks. With this incident happening in public view, the maids attending Ariel thought of stopping her, but they immediately stiffened under her intense gaze.

「**…Your eyepatch is in the way.**」

「Milady, taking it off here…」

「…Can't be helped I guess. So be it, there are more pressing matters than looking at your eyes.」

「More pressing?」

「You seem to be in need of chastisement.」

As she said so, both of Rion's cheeks were clapped in her hands. This treatment was also something he wasn't subjected to for a long time now.

「So enlighten me, what are you doing in this place?」

「W-we were only, discussing some matters, milady.」

「Who is that woman?」

「S-She is a student from the Academy attending the same year as Vincent-sama.」

While his cheeks were being struck, Rion was interrogated by Ariel in a strict tone. However, her eyes were already smiling. She was enjoying his presence after such a long time.

「What on earth might you be discussing with that woman, I wonder?」

「I… For now, I cannot…」

「…Ah, keeping secrets from me again?」

Ariel's eyes twitched visibly. It was the proof that she was really angry now.

「N-No, milady, you're mistaken! It just can't be revealed here… It's… Well, it's the usual…」

「…Oh? …The usual?」

Though she was still far from being satisfied, Ariel ran out of things to complain about.

After all, she was the one who told Rion to do something about Vincent's situation and because of that, she wasn't really in a position to complain about his activities.

「Yes, milady.」

「…I see, I guess it can't be helped then.」

After this, according to Rion's experience, this matter would be settled relatively quickly, but contrary to what he expected, the person who always makes things complicated cut into the conversation.

「You, what are you doing to Rion-kun?」

And that was none other than Maria. As with Vincent, Maria is hostile towards Ariel from the start.

「How about introducing yourself before interfering? Or perhaps, do you even lack such basic manners?」

Ariel showed no signs of being perturbed. In this, she was very different from her brother Vincent.

「I…」

「Spare me. After all, I am not really interested in who you are.」

「What did you say!?」

「Would you please leave us? I am currently in conversation with Rion here.」

Ariel said so while showing a smile on her face. It was conduct becoming of a noble lady– or rather, a dignified conduct, one would not expect from a child.

「…D-Doing that to Rion-kun… 」

Maria was able to stammer some words, despite clearly being pressured by Ariel's aura.

「Ah?」

「Stop being cruel to him.」

「…Cruel? What might you be talking about? When did I ever do something cruel to Rion?」

「Right now, In the public eye, you are making him perform a seiza on the ground.」

「And what is wrong with that?」

「What did you say?」

「Sometimes, I also make him kneel. Others too, it's not like I'm singling him out.」

「This way of flouting your social status is the problem!」

Maria shouted after somehow regaining her vigor, but…

「…I truly cannot understand you. Flouting my social status? This?」

Ariel inquired with a puzzled look on her face.

「An aristocrat like you will never understand!」

「Oh dear, it seems I'm not the only one failing at comprehension. In the end, you also fail to grasp the situation.」

It wasn't that Ariel suddenly understood what Maria was just saying, but she was certain that the attitude she witnessed was a very serious misconduct.

「What exactly do I not understand!?」

「Let me help you a bit. Who do you think you are talking to?」

「….Ariel-san of House Windhill.」

「Bravo. So you know who I am, yet behave like this regardless. What House do you happen to belong to?」

「…It's House Theodore.」

With Ariel not rising to her provocations and continuing to answer in a calm demeanor, Maria began to feel uneasy. She immediately realized that things weren't proceeding into her desired direction.

「Theodore… Theodore… Wasn't there a baronet of that name…」

Ariel could recall all Houses with a peerage. After all, that was knowledge expected of a noble lady. But she, mastering it at her current age even including the baronets, was splendid at this.

「That's probably the one you're thinking of, Theodore.」

「Splendid. I understand you're a commoner then?」

「And, what is wrong with that?」

「You're a commoner displaying gross impertinence in front of an aristocrat. Are you not aware that's a punishable crime?」

「I will not yield to such threats!」

「I care little for your thoughts on this matter. This is the law. I am invoking the law. I expect your conduct to be punished.」

「Punished?」

「There is a class system in this kingdom. This system is protected by law. Are you not even aware of that?」

「….It」

–Was unknown to her. But even if she did know, her attitude wouldn't change. She thought that the things she did were permitted by default due to her being a protagonist.

「So you actually didn't know. After all, in front of the law ignorance excuses no one.」

「…What wrong did I even commit?」

But even so, she was not able to act tough in front of Ariel. Ariel had the aura of a person that would not permit such a thing.

「That is a question for the person judging my claim. Punishment adequate to your misdeeds will be also in his remit.」

「…….」

Ariel completely overwhelmed Maria. Whether that was due to her being the antagonist in this game was unknown to Rion. The only thing he understood was that the two girls, who should never be allowed to meet together, encountered

each other in such a way and splendidly opened hostilities.

Keeping in mind that it could be the game plot correction at work, made him grow more anxious.

Ariel turned her sight to a silent Rion again and didn't concern himself with Maria anymore.

「Well then, when will we meet next?」

「…I would expect that to happen during New Year's break, milady.」

Rion wondered why she asked that when he knew that Ariel was not in a habit of asking such obvious questions.

「Oh? Are you never coming to this place again?」

「I… Had no more plans to do so?」

「In that case next week at the same time will be perfect.」

「Milady?」

「You clearly have free time, you shall spend it for my sake. Won't that be just splendid?」

「Ah… But…」

「Just. Splendid.」

「…As you say, milady.」

Rion wouldn't be able to defy something that was so strongly demanded by Ariel. To be exact, he didn't even feel like defying. Although, this particular request would be at the expense of his sleeping time.

「Well then, I shall excuse myself for today. Rion, let us meet again next week.」

「With greatest pleasure, Ariel-sama.」

Hearing the words of Ariel, her maids hurriedly run out off the shop to call the carriage that was parked nearby.

Ariel, being aware of that, spent some time in conversation with the shop owner praising the desserts before unhurriedly exiting the shop.

Rion could only see off her back.

「Rion-kun, if you are ever subjected to cruelty again, you can talk to me about it anytime.」

「I understand…」

「After all, our circumstances are similar. I think, I somehow understand how you feel.」

「…That's right.」

Rion didn't notice yet that the protagonist, Maria, already recognized him as a capture target. Maria's complaints about Rion's treatment were an attempt by her to sway Rion by a display of sympathy.

That in itself was all that Rion could have hoped for, but the final outcome, unfortunately, did not follow his plan.

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Rion's main miscalculation was in thinking that Maria was aiming for a specific route while in reality, she was aiming for a reverse harem situation.

She set her sights on multiple targets and never limited herself to just one.

One of the choices he thought he had was to let himself be the preferred target, and have Maria abandon the 'Crown Prince Arnold route', but that proved to be a non-starter.

Now, in complete contrast to what he wanted, Rion was just added as one of her many objectives. Still, even though he was doing that himself now that the opponent tried it on him, the feeling of being manipulated was unpleasant.

Nonetheless, for the sake of his intelligence gathering, being closer to target was convenient, so he decided to keep in close contact with Maria. Although this course of action brought great discomfort to him, that much was still acceptable.

Anyhow, Maria was getting proactive, boldly approaching Rion so much that it made Ryou wonder whether this game was possibly an eroge. However, according to Rion's investigation, that was not the case.

At the very least, according to his information, her relationship with Lancelot, who approached her the most, was platonic. That left him to wonder again why

did she behave in the way she did, but before long that also became clear.

There were capture targets that Maria knew how to trigger flags for and ones she didn't. Rion belonged to the latter category.

That was why she tried so many various kinds of approaches.

Many times it was showing her sympathy towards Rion's past and current life circumstances. On other occasions, she would try to show how wonderful it was to live freely or get him to talk about his dreams. There were also times when she even invited Rion for a heart-to-heart talk about his hardships.

"Succeeding by any means necessary", this expression fit her actions perfectly.

**[PR now thinks that she investigated Rion from Erwin through Lancelot's tea party]**

By encountering the conquest targets at the right time and place, she would trigger an event and set the flags that would help deepen her relationship with them. Just like in the game.

Rion was able to find out one more thing relating to this.

Maria aimed not only for the capture targets of the game she played, but she also set her sights on the people she met in this world.

Rion found that really greedy and grew to hate Maria even more, but that was three days ago.

Now he still hated her, but his feelings were no longer limited to just that and turned rather complex.

The reason for that lied in the fruits of his hard work in investigating her.

Patiently putting up with Maria brought him a success. He obtained information that would make the aims behind him approaching Maria nearly realized.

There was a notebook that Maria stealthily glanced into at times. In that notebook, all the information about the game that Maria knew was written. She was always consulting that before making a move.

How was he able to find out about that? By peeking, obviously.

She usually kept it close to her chest, but Rion, by exploiting a small window of opportunity, was able to look at its contents. Because there was little time, he was not able to read it all, but he was able to roughly understand the contents.

There were descriptions of capture targets' personalities along with notes on how to get acquainted with them and how to raise their flags. There were also names other than the capture targets. These included Ariel and Vincent.

Although these entries were mostly things that Rion could never get himself to agree with, it was pointless to worry about that. He calmed himself by thinking it was probably just the information from the game.

But what really caught the attention of Rion was the last page. The things written there had no relation whatsoever to the capture targets but involved an event that was supposed to happen once the story progressed forward past the capturing stage.

This was what made Rion's feelings regarding Maria complicated.

His biggest problem with Maria was Ariel's denunciation event. He established that even amongst all the rival characters, Ariel ranked as the most important. There was little detail about the event written but, it looked like that all the censure heaped by Ariel at the protagonist would be revealed and condemned by the public. It was highly likely to affect her engagement with Crown Prince Arnold.

In other words, the event that Rion had to prevent at all cost.

Even by using his last resort solution— Well, that was how things should be, but he was still hesitating. It was due to an event that would follow up shortly after.

『The Devil Extermination Event』.

An event where Maria, along with people she captured in the Academy would fight against a devil that would attack the royal castle. It seemed that this was the goal of the game.

If she and her comrades would be able to fend off the attack, the game would be beaten successfully. Failing would also result in a game over, but since all the characters perish and the kingdom falls, that ending is bad.

The reason why Maria flips her skirt at anyone was for the sake of gathering as many allies as possible and succeeding during this event. Now, Rion understood that much.

It was truly a simple, uninteresting and rather worthless game that neither he or Ryou would ever consider playing– but he couldn't just opt out.

After all, the country that was going to fall was the one he was currently living in.

If he killed Maria, the story might end even before reaching the attack of the devil. The kingdom would fall apart. Well then, should he let the story run its course to Ariel's future disaster? That wasn't something he could do either.

If he was able to fight off the devil after killing Maria, then everything would be fine. He was considering the possibility that killing her might result in the game world breaking free from the plot rails, but that was by no means guaranteed.

Rion faced a dilemma that he had no solution for.

「…Ouch.」

Feeling pain in his cheek, Rion's consciousness was brought back down to earth.

Ariel's green eyes were glaring at him. He suddenly remembered that he was in the middle of a tea party that she regularly organized every week.

「Are you paying attention now?」

「Do excuse me, milady, I was lost in thought.」

「Which was rather rude of you. You are not yourself recently, what plagues your thoughts so much?」

「…」

「Cat got your tongue?」

Ariel, in general, was strangely worried about him hiding things. Just like right now. In addition, the sharpness of her glare has increased.

「No, milady…」

「Then stop hesitating and say your mind.」

「What does milady think of his majesty, the Crown Prince?」

「Eh?」

「Forgive me please, I shouldn't have.」

「….So why? …What makes you ask that??」

「It's because…」

「Because?」

「In my heart, I am uneasy with the concept of a marriage arranged at birth. I understand such a thing is normal in the world of high nobles and yet… Could I hear milady's thoughts on the matter?」

「…To ask such an odd question… Why?」

She asked again, however, this time, while saying that, Ariel's face was full of melancholy. Rion, on the other hand, turned all gloomy thinking that he just asked something that he should've never had.

「…This is just the way things are, I suppose..」

But even despite the mood, Ariel still answered Rion's question.

「Is it due to aristocrats' sense of duty?」

「Does that really even need to be said?」

「I beg your forgiveness again.」

「Stop apologizing each and every time, it's tedious. Like you said, it is a norm for a young lady to marry a stranger, and by chance, for me, that stranger is his majesty Arnold.」

「Does that future make Ariel-sama happy?」

「……」

「…This was too presumptuous of me, please pretend you heard nothing.」

Ariel just glared at Rion without saying anything. He somehow managed to both understand and misunderstands her feelings at the same time.

She was not angry about being asked this question. It was the fact that it was Rion who asked that made her infuriated. And because she couldn't even vent

that frustration to him, she had no choice but to stay silent.

「May I ask another strange question?」

Not being able to bear with the awkward atmosphere any longer, Rion decided to change the subject.

「What is it this time?」

「Has milady ever heard about the devil?」

「Devil? The one from the nursery tales?」

「Nursery tales?」

「…If you're not asking about that, then what on earth are referring to?」

「I stumbled upon a weird rumor the other day. It seemed to be oddly credible, so to hear that it's just a nursery tale makes me quite surprised.」

「Was it about a revival of the devil that would bring this world to ruin?」

「Yes. That was exactly it.」

「Do you really believe in things like that?」

「It seemed somewhat compelling and was supposed to happen in the near future..」

「I see… The ending of the fables I heard was rather incoherent, only good for scaring little children.」

「Why was that?」

「"If you're really bad, the devil will come and take you" – Truly something only kids would take seriously.」

「I see.」

That really was a common theme for the nursery tales. However, Rion knew that there was a good chance that this particular one would come true.

「If the devil really came, what would Rion do?」

This time, it was Ariel's turn to ask Rion a question.

「Escape of course.」

「…Idiot.」

「Eh?」

It looked like Rion made Ariel angry again.

「Planning to run and leave me behind?」

「Ah! In that scenario, I would, of course, give it my all fighting for milady..」

「There's no need to try protecting me at all cost.」

「I respectfully disagree. Protecting you, milady, is the main reason I joined house Windhill. I would not have it any other way..」

「…Silly fool.」

This time, Rion's words caused a smile to bloom on Ariel's face. That smile came from the depths of her heart, a side of her she seldom revealed. Rion was completely captivated by it.

The reason behind the『I will protect Ariel』vow that Rion made a core of himself changed into being only half motivated by responsibility.

Now, the other half came from the fervent desire to protect her smile.

「Rion…」

With the smile he wanted to protect disappearing, Ariel's face had turned serious once more.

「…Milady?」

「I… Will become the Queen.」

「…So you will, milady.」

That was synonymous to being married to Crown Prince Arnold.

「When that time comes, I shall abandon my personal feelings and devote my very being to this country.」

「That sounds right.」

「That's why… At the very least, I do not wish to kill these feelings in me before that fateful day..」

「I don’t think, milady, that anyone would begrudge you that.」

Ariel’s feelings were Rion’s top priority no matter what.

「That selfishness of mine will be source of many troubles for you, you know..」

「I pledged to protect Ariel-sama, I would never be deterred by just that.」

「Really?」

「Yes. And that resolve will not change, whether it be now or in the future.」

「Thank you.」

「…It’s the least I can do.」

Rion was astonished by her words. It was the first time that Ariel conveyed words of gratitude to him.

「Why, exactly, are you startled now?」

Seeing Rion’s startled expression, Ariel’s aura returned to normal.

「No reason, milady. Would you please allow me to say one last thing?」

「…Go ahead.」

「No matter what I do from now on. No matter how it looks to the surroundings. Will you please remember and have faith that all of it is for your sake?」

「And where did that come from?」

「Can you please believe that even with no reason offered?」

「…Really now. Fine, so be it. Since it can’t be helped, no matter what happens from now on I will believe in you.」

「I am extremely grateful for that.」

**(*TN : Please get married already.)**

What Rion, having resolved himself to do anything it takes, feared the most was losing Ariel’s trust. Even though he tried to prepare himself for that eventuality, he couldn’t help but plead for her faith nonetheless.

It was because if he didn’t, he was not confident that he could gather enough resolve.

His last resort was to kill Maria. But because doing so looked impossible, he understood that by attempting that he would certainly lose his life as a consequence.

But that was what it took to defy the world itself.

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**TLC’s Corner:**

**There goes the today’s chapter. I am also planning to complete the chapter 17 today or at least if fate let’s me do it. We also took a more moderate approach in editing, maybe not noticeable but please do tell us if you have inputs.**

**As always, for comments, inquiries, ~~hate letter~~ and suggestions please go through the contact us section.**

**Thank you.**

# Action, Action, Action

**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi Wo Shite – Chapter 17 – *"Action, Action, Action"***

After resolving himself to a future course of action, Rion's everyday life had become even busier as the number of things that he had to do expanded noticeably.

First of them was to put more effort into his self-training. With his last resort being the assassination of Maria, it was necessary for him to have the strength to make it a reality.

After all, Maria's talent in magic was something recognized not only by the Academy alone. On top of that, her talent being something that surpassed anyone in the Academy was also a recognized fact. Furthermore, she seemed to have an aptitude for swordsmanship too. Although her fencing skills couldn't be said to be as good as her magic, they were still enough to place her name in the Academy's top 10.

She was the protagonist that would fight the devil. Not only she was enjoying the blessings of being the main character, Rion was able to understand that she was strictly training herself as well.

He might possibly have to face that Maria. He understood that it was impossible to defeat her with his current meager prowess. And though it was still doubtful whether he would be able to pull it off after going to such lengths in training himself, it was not like he could just watch and do nothing.

So now, his weekday's training was not limited to the period before dawn but also expanded to the time when people were waking up. He also started to train himself during the time people went to sleep and stayed up quite late. Some of his sleeping time was now shaved off by the new training regimen.

Furthermore, his practice sessions were not limited to weekdays anymore.

He even did them early in the morning during weekends. He would go to a

place where demonic beasts appear and accumulate combat experience. Was this recklessness or would this training method, with enough effort, make him even stronger? Rion was not entirely sure.

However, the time remaining to take action was not even a year. So rather than worrying, he would rather act. And more training was the first thing that came to his mind.

While that continued he has also spent his time on other various projects.

In the Academy, his main priority was expanding his personal network of connections. He targeted both the noble female students that were jealous about Maria's close relations with big Houses and the prince and the commoner ones that were jealous that she got to mingle with aristocracy despite being one of them.

Although he was not aiming for something like an Anti-Maria alliance, he wanted to make an information network where he could get ahold of any rumors about her that would be advantageous for him to know and have the ability to contradict any gossip damaging Ariel or Vincent.

This was considerably hard to create. It was not like anyone who bore animosity towards Maria would do, on the contrary, those whose hate for her was so strong that they would act on it openly had to be rejected.

Any action, likely a rather reckless one, taken by them that was favorable to Ariel was certain to be linked to Ariel and impact her reputation. It was something to be avoided at all cost to prevent the denunciation event from happening.

Rion believed in Ariel and he had faith that she would never move to torment Maria, like the rival character in the game, did. He was certain that the event was based on false charges.

Furthermore, Rion was also preparing another trick.

This time, it was a plan that did not involve the Royal Academy but the dark side of Rion, the Flay Syndicate in the slums.

(EN: this is actually Anachronistic Stew, according to Chief Editor, organized crime as we know it developed during the 19th century. Just look up Assasin's Creed: Syndicate)

「Who sponsored the contract?」

「It was possible to follow the representative. It was viscount House Lyle.」

Ain was the person answering Rion's questions. In Rion's absence, he was managing the syndicate operations in the slums.

「Anyone in particular?」

「Hard to say, boss. The contact works for the House's majordomo, but that doesn't say much. The contract though seems to favor one person in particular..」

「Lady of the House does not forgive, eh? Buying death for all lovers of her husband..」

「Yeah.」

「Viscount House Lyle… Something to keep in mind..」

「Boss, is it good to spy on employers like that?」

「It's fine if we're not exposed, so just don't go too far.」

「Do we choose to stop then?」

「No. Information is power. Knowledge of circumstances around the contract can be our shield if we just accept the jobs blind one day we'll end up getting framed into something that will destroy the group.」

「…True that.」

Well, this was also an excuse. For him, it would really be a trump card, but one to use not for the sake of the syndicate, but when something happens to Ariel.

That event would probably escalate into a situation where not just the students would get involved. Rion knew that the fate of the rival characters in such games tended to end up like that. With that being the case, even if it was just a little bit, he had to gather strength in order to save Ariel if that was to happen. It didn't matter if he did that by blackmail.

The tricks that Rion was stuffing up his sleeves were not limited to this.

「How's the other business?」

「Too early to say. We probably got a mark we can exploit…」

「Aha… And how's the search for a powerful backer?」

「We've got some grunts from provost, useful in a way, but worthless for that purpose.」

「Yeah, even a captain wouldn't be enough.」

An aristocrat with influence comparable to the marquess houses. That was the kind of connection Rion desired. Someone, who in exchange for bribes and favors would save them when the time came.

「To be honest, boss, it's hard.」

「Yeah? Why?」

「The potential backers look for profit, but there's hardly any to be made in here. Unless you're in urgent need of making someone vanish.」

「So we're just not attractive enough?」

「For them, we're just a bunch of thugs from the slums.」

「Then we need to expand, we gotta turn into something they can't ignore.」

「…Seriously.」

And just like that Rion formulated another massive goal. For petty criminals like Ain, who lived their whole life in the slums, his ambitions were too huge.

But although he, and the other henchmen, thought so, they also found it fun to have a life goal like that.

「How much longer until we're in full control of the slum?」

「Not long, boss.」

「Huh?」

「I was going to mention that later. See, the majority of Gordon's group wants to join us now. 」

「….Why?」

「’Cause the standard of life in our zone is better and they wanna have some of that too.」

「Is that a ploy to take over from inside?」

「I thought about it, but… Nah, not possible.」

「Why’s that?」

「If they remove you, boss, won’t everything just go back to shit? After all, you’re why the changes happened.」

「…Too much ass kissing.」

「Heh, a pure fact this. We all just done as we’ve been told. If boss, wasn’t boss, life here would never get so good.」

「…Alright, enough. You make me feel sick with all that sweetness.」

If Ain was to be asked, this side of Rion was one of his charms. Going from being terribly scary when angered to showing his subordinates demeanor not befitting his age.

(TN*: Ain is gay for Rion. PR:not gay, just Paedophile)

Not only was he reliable, Rion was also someone who would somehow want to do something for the people around him.

Without realizing it himself, Rion had garnered a lot of popularity within his subordinates and the dwellers of the slum.

The reason why the other influential organizations there decided to join their syndicate was thanks to that reputation. People saw him not just a mere child, but possibly the slum’s ray of hope.

「So how to proceed?」

「If you feel there are no problems, then go ahead. We’ll be able to pull off larger things with everyone gathered under our lead.」

「Will do, boss. I’ll pass the news.」

「Until I come back, all the problems with this are on your head. Just make that lot understand that there’ll be no changes for the better before we get a grip on

their zones.」

「Understood. Will do that. But I'll have to spend some time there. They need to get familiar with our faces.」

「Perfect. All yours then.」

Ain knew that Rion would not just wait for an opportunity but after hearing the reports on the state of their new acquisitions, he would think about what they should do for the people living there until the day he came back.

He was certain that once they were aware of that side of Rion, any malcontents would vanish and all of them would soon follow Rion from the depths of their heart.

After all, to Ain and his folks, Rion was that kind of existence.

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Although Rion's days turned busy, it was not as if he was disregarding his job as a valet to Vincent. He was merely using the free time between the tasks to undertake various projects.

But even if that was the case…

「….Rion, Why don't you go and rest a bit?」

Rion, who was accompanying Vincent in his studies, was frantically fighting drowsiness, something that was never a problem before and he found it hard to believe he was struggling with this now.

「…My apologies, sir, where have we stopped last time?」

「Don't change the subject, please. My study sessions are progressing favorably, so you don't need to be here. Go and rest.」

「Sir, that would be absolutely unacceptable.」

Rion had no inclination to accept Vincent's proposal. He felt that he became who he was exactly because he was Vincent's valet.

「I kept my counsel thus far to let you act as you wished, but I can stay silent no longer. Working at the cost of your health will not be tolerated, do you

understand that?」

「…Crystal clear, sir.」

「I know and I can see that you cherish the well-being of me and my sister, but you need to accept you are important to us as well. Please act with that in mind.」

「Vincent-sama…」

「Never forget that, Rion.」

「I shall etch that in my heart.」

If Rion was to be asked, Vincent was truly a gentle lord. Although he tended to be selfish at times, but that was only pointed at the foolish servants who offended him.

And though he had been really self-centered before, now that side of him disappeared completely.

As he noticed Rion's serious approach to receiving and following up on his selfish requests, Vincent became happy and his selfishness disappeared because he didn't want to put his valet through such hardships any longer.

Rion wasn't aware of that. For him, rather than a selfish lord, Vincent was always a considerate person.

But because the people in Vincent's surroundings were not trying to properly understand Vincent as Rion did, their assessment about him never changed.

Rion couldn't stand that.

And now the same thing was happening in the Academy. Students' and staff's evaluation of Vincent was not improving either. Even though the malicious rumors about him spread very easily, no one was talking about how Vincent was now.

Rion wanted to do something about that.

「Rion?」

「Sir?」

「Honestly, just go to bed already. You're barely keeping awake.」

「That's not true, sir, I was just pondering on a certain problem.」

「…That's enough excuses. Rest. That's an order.」

「…As you command.」

Since this time Vincent's words were accompanied by an order, Rion was compelled to follow. All the more, since this command was a result of Vincent's kindness.

Standing up from his seat, Rion headed towards the room next door that was his to use.

While leaving he heard Vincent say from behind.

「Don't try to face all your troubles alone. I don't mind sharing some of the burdens you carry.」

「…I thank you for kind words, sir.」

Vincent's gentleness nearly made Rion involuntarily shed tears. But even so, he had no plans to stop taking it all upon himself.

It was also likely that Vincent wouldn't believe the astounding truth that this was a world from a game. And even if he did, Rion didn't expect any action that Vincent would take to head into a good direction.

Vincent was one of the characters in the game. Just like in the case of the protagonist where an unknown force compelled events to twist in her favor, Rion thought that other characters were prisoners of similar influences.

He thought that only irregular existences, not included in the game, were capable of taking actions that would alter the plot.

He had no way to determine if that idea was correct, but since he was uncertain, he felt he had no choice but to take the course of action that he thought was right.

This was tremendously harsh on his mental health. Because this was a game world, altering the course of the story meant changing the world itself. It was outrageous for someone of his station to attempt that.

And there was also the nagging doubt of whether changing the course of the

story was even possible in the first place? Facing this question as he tried to attempt that very thing, Rion was being overwhelmed by pressure.

But when talking about Rion, one had to remember that he could probably divide the strain within himself and he didn't fear something like dying. It was fine to say that he didn't even feel like his life was worth anything.

Part of the pressure he was feeling came from the worry about how it would affect his relationship with Ariel in the future.

He was strained by the thought of how badly would their life be impacted if he ever failed while carrying their future on his shoulders.

Rion, going to his room to rest as ordered, was flooded by dark thoughts as those.

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While Rion was struggling with his worries, this world's protagonist also had various things on her mind.

Although compared to Rion's, Maria's problems seemed rather less significant.

「Sigh, I'm not feeling enough reaction, did I overdo it?」

She was speaking to herself as she read her notebook. The page she had it opened on had the names of her capture targets written. Not all the possible ones from the game but the ones she designated for herself in this world.

Below each of them, she wrote their lineage, personality, and abilities. At the very bottom of each entry, she listed what she thought was the key to capturing them. The records for the characters of the game had relevant information from the game itself while the non-game characters information was just her wild guesses.

*(I need to reduce by half… No, since new students come soon, I need to pick a third of the people from the list)*

The number of names written in her notebook was roughly around twenty. With so many male students approaching her, there was no way for her to get no response from that guy.

*(So who should I keep… Arnold and Lancelot are a must. Marcus is alright, so is Julius… And now that I think about it, no one else really matters, huh?)*

The names she listed were all characters in the game. Which meant that the ones she successfully set a flag with were mostly game characters. To Maria, this fact was quite shocking.

*(Hmph… Even though I'm so beautiful.)*

Maria honestly thought that her outward appearance in this world was rather excellent. Well, to be fair, that was to be expected. She was a protagonist after all.

However, her appearance seemed to strongly affect the game characters only and had hardly any impact on others. This was quite unexpected for her.

Maria thought that numerous males would flock to court her, but that didn't happen at all.

And that wasn't by chance

After all, in this world, particularly in the noble society, that kind of direct approach was something seen as disgraceful. If a noble wanted to court a female, he would be indirect while trying to gauge the feelings of the opposite gender, closing their distance accordingly.

It was also important to remember that only a few aristocrats were permitted to love freely, in that world, this was a common state of affairs.

Maria didn't know about any of that. And it was not the only thing that she was ignorant about.

The common sense and customs of this world were never introduced in the game at all.

Although it was certainly in part due to a crude work of the developers, that was not the only reason. *Ryou initially thought that this game was only an otome game, but actually, that was not the case.

(TN: We have decided to change this one from Flay into Ryou as we suspect author error on this part. Flay is the least of them three to try to figure things out about otome games.)

The real genre of this world was a simulation / role-playing game hybrid.

The name of the game itself was Elemental Party.

The game was divided into two parts. The Royal Academy was the part where you grew stronger with your comrades, while the second part was where the comrades that she gathered would spearhead an army fighting against the Devil. Because the latter was actually more important, the party gathering prelude was just an extra which one could enjoy many times.

There were various people available to be invited and exclusive events linked to who the player chose That was the reason why the trivial details of the story setting were omitted.

Well, to be honest, that still was cutting corners. Overall the content was rather underwhelming and instead of gaining popularity, it ended up as a shitty game that was barely known.

Maria was currently going through the first half part of this flimsy offering. However, this wasn't a game anymore where events would trigger one after another according to the route that she chose, this was an actual world where the surroundings would change according to her actions.

(PR: Hey Readers, it looks like Maria will start to redeem herself from this point.
TN: I don't think we're about to go there yet, this Arc is long so I'm guessing it would be around the second half.)

Maria fumbling like this also was an action.

*(As long as I have the four of them, nobody else would make a difference.)*

The strength of a marquess House member and the royal family was astounding. In addition to this, Maria. being a protagonist. was going to be the main battle character of the future war party too. Other people could only serve as support characters or bait. Having any of them fight would be completely ineffective. Because of that, the second part of the game always played out the same way and the first half didn't have any replayability.

*(So, do I just play how I like now? Should be fine I guess. And I think that unlike the start, it is fine to approach them closer now.)*

Maria circled the name of the targets that she has chosen. Arnold, Lancelot,

Marcus, a descendant of knights from class A, Julius, a wind attribute user who specializes in support magic, and lastly Bruce, an earth attribute user who specializes in defense. Lastly, although his abilities were still unknown, Maria highlighted Rion's name.

「The way Rion carries himself is really suspicious and it makes me quite intrigued. There's also his looks and his black hair… His magic must be strong. There's no way he's not a hidden character.」

The hidden character were those whose appearance was triggered by a certain pattern of events. They were all special with abilities comparable to the protagonist.

At least that's how『Elemental Party』handled this concept. This feature should have guaranteed the game's replayability, but because the appearance of those hidden NPC's depended on excessively obscure patterns of actions and because of the game's unpopularity, there were only a few players who ever saw this feature in action, resulting in it being considered something of a myth. It was a huge blunder by the developers.

(*Anyway, that woman will join the Academy soon, so the main show is about to start. Gotta get fired up and give it my all.*)

The new students were about to enter the Academy. Many of them were crucial characters that Maria was waiting for. Ariel was one of those.

Ariel in the game would be a catalyst for many events. For Maria, her absence as a rival character would make things hard.

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**HnM Translations' Corner**

**Second chapter of the week, so welp there goes another revelation of the Kamui(author). Yep, Maria still needs a reality check. Oh, I'm not ahead anymore, you can take my comments less seriously now. Anyway, the next chapter would probably be next week, I'll probably take a rest for 1-2 days, then go back to translating again afterwards.**

**Anyway, I'd like to give my special thanks to Kai.**

**For comments, suggestions, requests, ~~death threats and copyrights issues,~~**

**please head to the contact us section.**

**Thank you very much.**

# The Day of the Villainess' Ascend to the Stage

**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 18:**
***"The Day of the Villainess' Ascend to the Stage "***

*Numerous carriages loaded with luggage were arriving one after another. Crammed with personnel handling that baggage, the school gate was in complete turmoil*

*It was a spectacle that could be seen every year due to the arrival of new school attendees.*

*In order to avoid that scrum, Rion and Vincent stood beside each other, some distance away from the gate, gazing at the scene.*

「*They have arrived!*」

*After finally spotting the carriage they had been waiting for, Rion raised his voice.*

「*So they have. Shall we go and welcome them?*」

「*Certainly, sir*」

*The two of them began running towards the gate. Their destination was a carriage carrying House Windhill coat of arms.*

*After two of her maids disembarked, Ariel showed up in the carriage's door.*

「*…Rion.*」

*Spotting Rion who came to pick them up, she muttered his name.*

*She surprised him by presenting her hands in his direction, but he complied without protest and helped her down. Ariel descended with a satisfied smile.*

「*I wonder who did you learn this from?*」

*Ariel asked holding the hand that he offered in assistance.*

「*Vincent-sama educated me on this subject, milady.*」

*「Onii-sama did? Since when did my dear brother have this mischievous side to him, I wonder?」*

*「You wound me, sister, this was not mischief, but consideration.」*

*「…Which is no less surprising in itself.」*

*It was the first time that Ariel heard the word "consideration" coming from Vincent.*

*「Really now. Even I am capable of maturing somewhat. But enough of that for now, we need to move on not to hinder other Houses unduly. Rion, take care of the luggage please.」*

*This was surprising to hear too. A scene where Vincent would actually pay mind to other people beyond lip service had never occurred in Ariel's imagination. She thought that Vincent might have matured indeed.*

*And it was most-likely due to the person who promptly picked up her luggage, Rion.*

*「Rion, there's scant need for you to carry all that personally. We are not lacking in number of servants here.」*

*Rather than having him carry her luggage, having spare time to talk with Rion was more important to Ariel.*

*「Milady, won't the rest of staff be busy with Erwin-sama's belongings?」*

*「…Now that you mention it.」*

*It was not unusual for Rion to be considerate to others, but it didn't sit well with Ariel if the person in question was Erwin.*

*「Were milady and Erwin-sama not traveling together?」*

*「We have separated from the start. I decided to depart while they were still in the middle of preparations.」*

*She recalled telling her parents that travel at a leisurely pace would be preferable and breaking free from their embrace as they shed tears.*

*「Is that so… Nevertheless, I will take your luggage now. I imagine it is important to unpack them soon, so taking care of the matter promptly won't be*

*a bad thing.*」

「*I suppose you are correct.*」

「*In that case, please follow me.*」

「*Oh? You know the way to the ladies' dormitory? Why is that?*」

「*Eh? I thought it prudent to be familiar with all places within the premises…*」

「*…This can't be faulted. Lead the way then.*」

「*Milady.*」

*Ariel's jealousy was immediately at full throttle right after arrival. Having not realized Ariel's favor even with this, Rion was considerably thickheaded.*

*But that was because he convinced himself that Ariel, an aristocrat of a prestigious House, wouldn't see a mere valet like him as a man that could be together with her.*

*On the other hand, Vincent, who was forced to see the two of them being like this had glad yet melancholic feelings about it.*

*After graduating from the Academy, the two would enter adulthood. What was waiting for Ariel there was her marriage to Crown Prince Arnold. Ariel and Rion only had three more years together to spend their time like this.*

*He was conflicted between wanting them to treasure their prized time together and having them remain oblivious due to the grief that awaited them once the time passed if they became aware of their feelings.*

「*Onii-sama! If you keep standing there, you will be a hindrance!*」

*Unaware of the worries of her older brother, the little sister called with an obvious sarcasm tied to the words that Vincent said earlier.*

「*Yes, yes, I know. I'm coming.*」

*Vincent could only follow her small back.*

◇◇◇

◇◇◇

*After carrying the luggage to the dorm, it was now the handmaidens' job to unpack it. Relieving Rion from his burden, Ariel strolled along the school building accompanied by him.*

*Their destination was the Lounge.*

*Vincent didn't come with them. It was to avoid any further troubles from happening. Anyhow, he wanted to avoid coming in contact with Maria and if possible, Lancelot as well. Naturally, this course of action was recommended by Rion*

*With Vincent being a stepping stone character, that's even less important than the antagonist, his reputation would certainly fall upon coming into contact with Maria.*

*Although Rion wanted to avoid having Ariel encountering Maria too, such suggestions were doomed to fail. A meeting with Ariel's fiance, Crown Prince Arnold couldn't be avoided and having to meet with him meant that meeting with Maria was inevitable.*

*Their business in the Lounge today was precisely to meet Arnold and have Ariel offer her greetings upon joining the Academy. In Ariel's circumstances, this act was an unavoidable responsibility.*

「*Please inform his highness that lady Ariel Windhill wishes for a moment of his time.*」

*Rion stated their intentions to the usher guarding the entrance.*

*Hearing this, the royal servant entered the Lounge, most likely to ask for instructions.*

「*Rion.*」

「*Milady?*」

「*What is this place?*」

「*I… believe this is the Lounge?*」

*Rion was bewildered by the question as Ariel should have known that.*

*「Is all this ceremony necessary for the meeting to happen?」*

*「That is so, milady.」*

*「I see.」*

*Ariel's shapely eyebrows knitted together. It was a sign that she was displeased by something.*

*「Does this notion displease you milady?」*

*「Are you aware of the Academy's customs?」*

*In this Academy, the commoners and royalties were taking lessons together. Although these days the students were assigned to a class mostly accordingly to their social status, originally that wasn't the case.*

*The royal family and the aristocrats must hear the voice of the commoners. Overcoming the hurdle of social status difference, they were supposed to improve themselves together. Although the country itself was strict on social positions, for some reason the ideals of the Academy were designed to cross over that gap.*

*This Lounge's existence was contradictory to that ideals. Or so Ariel narrated.*

*「I am aware of this, milady. I also judged it wise not to broach the subject.」*

*「…Explain?」*

*Ariel was not happy with Rion's implied suggestion that this obvious wrong should not be corrected.*

*「There is nothing to be gained from this.」*

*「…One should right obvious wrongs.」*

*「One would expect the Queen to do so. Yes. But milady is yet to take the crown.」*

*「…That is …Not incorrect.」*

*Although her displeasure did not subside, she was able to understand him. Ariel voiced a reluctant assent.*

*「I apologize for making you wait. His highness, the Crown Prince required time*

*to prepare himself adequately…」*

*「…Let us proceed, Ariel-sama.」*

*Rion became visibly discontent at the usher's words. Since Ariel was Arnold's fiance, meeting her was expected of him. Rion thought that proper etiquette demanded that he was the party to initiate the meeting.*

*But because Ariel didn't seem to pay it any mind and entered the room without voicing any complaints, Rion also followed after her silently.*

*The Lounge was occupied by the usual faces.*

*There were two sofas in the middle of the room facing each other. The one farther from the entrance was occupied by Maria and Arnold, the other one was taken by Charlotte and Lancelot.*

*This arrangement stoked the flames of anger in Rion's heart, but just like before, Ariel didn't mention it with a single word.*

*She stepped forward, stood in front of the Crown Prince, and bowing elegantly she spoke.*

*「Your highness, it has been a long time.」*

*「…So it was.」*

*Arnold replied to the greetings clearly displeased.*

*「I have joined the ranks of the students today. I consider it a high honor to be in the same place as your highness from now on.」*

*「…I see. Is there anything else you require?」*

*「Nothing at all, I merely came to greet highness.」*

*「Very well, I bid you a good day then.」*

*「Of course your highness, I shall excuse myself.」*

*「Eh?」*

*Arnold's eyes had suddenly shown clear confusion. Rion found that attitude and cold words abominable and his impression of the Crown Prince worsened markedly.*

「*Now then. Rion, let us go back.*」

「*Milady, this*」

*As expected, Ariel still didn't utter a word of complaint and with a composed voice, she only bade Rion to leave with her.*

「*The matter here is settled, it would be impolite to make onii-sama wait.*」

「*…Yes, milady.*」

*If Ariel herself wouldn't say a word about it, Rion had no choice but to stay silent. But even if that wasn't the case, there's no way he could actually voice his complaints directly to Arnold. Still, Rion's composure tended to desert him when it came to things that would sadden Ariel.*

*Looking clearly unsatisfied he turned to follow behind Ariel and leave the room.*

「*Rion-kun*」

*Not even realizing the wrath burning in Rion's heart, which could be easily guessed by the tone of her voice, an insensitive voice called out to him. There was only one person that would do such a thing.*

*Feeling that he was not obligated to answer her, Rion ignored Maria.*

「*Rion-kun! Wait a little bit!*」

*Even this was ignored as he headed towards the room's exit.*

「*Rude cur! Shouldn't you answer when people call you?*」

*A male voice called out reproaching Rion's attitude. He knew who it was without even needing to turn his back.*

*This time, it was not a person that he could ignore. Rion turned his head towards Lancelot.*

「*Pardon milord? Is there something that you wish from me?*」

「*Maria has a question for you, filth.*」

「*Ah, apologies. What is the matter Maria-sama?* 」

「*Since you came here already, would you stay and talk for a while?*」

*「I'm ashamed to admit to being confused, is that an invitation for lady Ariel?」*

*「No, I'm inviting you, Rion.」*

*「In that case, I'm afraid it's impossible.」*

*「Why? Since you came here already anyway, wouldn't it be nice to have a little chat?」*

*「I am here because I'm attending Ariel-sama, not on my own time.」*

*「I warn you, stop being rude, Maria is going to great lengths to invite you.」*

*Lancelot yet again has cut into the conversation. However, Rion couldn't comprehend the reasoning behind his words. The one who was rude was clearly Maria, not him. But he wasn't in a position to complain about this.*

*Normally, Rion would navigate the situation without giving anyone an opportunity to take offense, but right now he was still angry about prince Arnold's behavior earlier.*

*So he was not able to bear with this any longer.*

*「Lancelot-sama, please hear me out.」*

*「What?」*

*「This is the Lounge, a special place for high nobility and exceptional students. Don't you think it would be outrageous for a simple common servant like me to participate in friendly discussions here?」*

*「It would… Not be acceptable most of the time. But Maria wishes it, so I shall offer a special dispensation on this occasion.」*

*After hearing this reply, Rion deduced that reasoning with Lancelot wouldn't go anywhere. His words veiled a sarcasm aimed at Maria who acted as if she owned the place while being just a commoner.*

*However, Lancelot didn't even notice that and replied normally. Furthermore, being given a special exception just because of Maria was an outcome beyond reason.*

*Lancelot was clearly in a state where it was unthinkable to expect proper judgment from him.*

*「Even with your magnanimity milord, I can not do that in good conscience. Forgive me for refusing.」*

*「Do you really think you can defy me unpunished?」*

*Hearing this, Rion thought that Lancelot was clearly more suited for the role of a villain.*

*However letting himself be distracted by such thoughts and not replying promptly was an error on Rion's part. Because now Ariel inserted herself into the conversation.*

*「And what might you mean by that dear sir?」*

*「What?」*

*「Did your hearing suffer with age? I shall repeat myself clearly then. Punishment? What do you mean by that Lancelot Minister Aquasmea?」*

*「I heard you from the start woman.」*

*「Then answer my question. Didn't you just say it is rude not to do so?」*

*「…Your servant's attitude is insulting for a person of my station. It deserves punishment. 」*

*「Tsk, tsk. I did not ask what do you see fit punishing, I am asking what do you understand by punishment.」*

*「That's…..」*

*Lancelot was being overwhelmed by the aura that Ariel was emitting. In times like this, the pressure that Ariel brought to bear would be clearly felt even by her fellow aristocrats of the same rank. Forgetting the wrath within him, Rion was in awe of her demeanor.*

*「Hmph, unable to answer I see. Let me give you a hand and do so in your stead.」*

*「…What are you trying to say?」*

*「If you act in any way against Rion here, I will thoroughly savor the consequences you will face.」*

*「What did you say!?」「Ariel-sama!」*

*「This is a person of House Windhill. Acting against him is acting against my House. Is that clear enough?」*

*「Ariel-sama, that's …」*

*「You be quiet. This is a noble dispute, mind yourself.」*

*「…Ariel Windhill, are you threatening a conflict between our families?」*

*Because the scope of what Ariel invoked grew huge, Lancelot was shaken. In reality, a marquess house wouldn't make a move over a mere valet, but it seemed that comprehending that was beyond Lancelot at the moment.*

*「You started this Lancelot. The fault is yours too. Don't you agree, your highness?」*

*「Ah, Eh, Yes」*

**Because the subject was suddenly brought up to his attention, Arnold inadvertently agreed.*

***(*TN: Read as Pushover.)***

*「In that case, we are done here. Rion, we are leaving.」*

*「…At once, milady」*

*Ariel concluded the conversation before Arnold could even take back his words of agreement. With this, the incident ended in her favor.*

*But even so, Rion couldn't help but curse his carelessness. He should've already learned that cases such as this wouldn't end well, just like how they never did when Vincent was involved.*

*「Ariel-sama.」*

*「Yes Rion?」*

*「I think it would be for the best to avoid unnecessary conflicts in the future. 」*

*「…This was nothing of the sort, I did what I had to.」*

*「Milady did it to cover for me. I am grateful, but that was not yet required at that moment.」*

*「I disagree」*

*「I am a tool that should be of use to you. Milady should not tangle herself into conflicts over tools like me.」*

*「But…」*

*Rion was unhappy with the actions she took for his sake. Ariel almost voiced her displeasure with his reaction but stopped herself with her face turning peevish.*

*「Please value yourself more. Having a confrontation against another marquess house, furthermore one involving the Crown Prince himself would deal a huge amount of damage to milady's position.」*

*「…It's fine.」*

*「There's no way…」*

*「Ah stop already, it really is fine Arnold has hated me already for quite some time now.」*

*「Eh?」*

*「The Crown Prince hates me. He always did, far before the betrothal came to be. 」*

*「….Why is that?」*

*It was the first time Rion heard this story.*

*「I wonder… I was still unaware of the circumstances back then. I believe back then I was really looking forward to meeting him and gave it my all to be a fitting partner for his highness.」*

*「So why did he come to hate you despite that?」*

*「Because I overdid it on our first meeting with my desire to be a proper fiance? For any number of other small reasons? I do not even really know which ones exactly. All of them perhaps?」*

*She could now properly look back at her previous actions, something which she failed to do during that time. It was not just because she had grown up. It was also because her feelings have already changed from back then.*

*「To think that Ariel-sama was this serious about his highness…」*

*But Rion failed to comprehend that.*

*「…Only feelings that are conveyed from the start matter, the ones that are unsaid hold no value.」*

*「I disagree milady, I believe you will be rewarded for thinking of your partner and working to fit him better. Even if you never said that you care so much.」*

*Rion paused realizing that his words were careless. More so because he himself did not believe that.*

*「Rion?」*

*「…Feelings that are hidden hurt.」*

*「Yes, they do」*

*「But even so, thinking about the well being of your precious person and giving it your all for their sake, even if it brings you nothing in return……」*

*「Yes?」*

*「I believe it still can bring happiness.」*

*「I see… I suppose you are right.」*

*He said he didn't just "think" but "believe" that was the case. Ariel was not someone that would miss small details like this. Rion believed that he would still find happiness even if his feelings were not rewarded. However, what about herself? When she began thinking about that she couldn't find it in herself to agree with him. Her reason knew that she shouldn't think that way. However, her feelings disagreed.*

*Even if she acted mature, the feelings within Ariel's heart were rather childish.*

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***Translator's Corner:***

*There we go, things are bound to get more interesting from here on now that*

*your lovely villainess has entered the stage. I will be translating the first half of the next chapter today and hopefully be done with it tomorrow.*

*With all that said, please do look more forward to our releases.*

*Thank you.*

***(If you have any comments, suggestion and inquiries please do get in touch with us using the contact us button found in the menus.)***

# The Desires of the Villainess.

**Akuyaku Reijou ni Koi wo Shite – Chapter 19:**
***"The Desires of the Villainess."***

The surroundings were still dark and the sky was shining with starlight. In one of the quiet school backyards so densely covered in trees that one might mistake it for a forest, only the swings of Rion's sword could be heard.

That was the place where Rion conducts his daily practice sessions.

His morning training consisted solely of practice swinging to enhance his physical strength and foundations. He had to do it alone and there was no other than that place where he could practice in seclusion

He started with sprints and then switched to muscle building afterward. Before, his training regimen finished at this point, but now he could even increase the intensity up to two-fold with no problems.

The thought of increasing duration also came to his mind, but it was rejected due to time constraints. He had to obtain the strength to kill Maria within the three year period he would spend at the Academy. Any spare time needed to be directed towards acquiring skills that could be used in actual battle.

That being said, Rion knew very little about live combat. Although he was able to accumulate experience by fighting demonic beasts from time to time, in the end, that was still fighting against a kind of animal. It was different from a battle with a human able to use magic and swordsmanship.

Because of that, he had to rely on his own imagination to figure out things that could work in that scenario.

His deliberations led him into concluding that he needed to polish his magic. The reason being that he couldn't improve swordsmanship much by self-study anyway and if there was something that could be counted as his advantage over Maria, it would be the multiple magic attributes that he could use.

He thought that using this to the fullest was the wiser course of action.

As he drawn his sword numerous motes of light began surrounding Rion. Looking closely, one would notice that they were not uniform in color. The ones tinted brilliant crimson belonged to the spirit Rion named『Sarah』, the ones shining blue on the other hand belonged to the water spirit『Diane』.

The color of their attributes was hard to distinguish because there was no need to use their power at the moment. What was currently happening could be in simple words, a formation training.

Rion figured out the way to call the spirits without unnecessarily expending their strength by himself.

The normal way was using your own mana as an offering to call out the spirits and then using them to activate your spell by channeling your mana. Rion was able to call them without expending mana because they were always beside him at all times and they decided to lend their strength to him on their own. That relationship was not like a contract with mana as a currency, but rather something more akin to a friendship. Rion was not aware of this distinction, but despite that, he was still able to develop the relationship further.

「Sarah, Diane, let's start with the first formation, the F1」

That was how Rion usually gave his spirits instructions. Since he was doing this subconsciously and was interacting with them as if with an equal, the spirits really liked that part of him.

Expecting that following his request might make him happy, the spirits assumed formation. Diane was assigned defense duty, Sarah's role, on the other hand, was offense. The water spirit was swirling around Rion's body while Sarah was spreading out in front and above him.

With their formation in place, Rion lunged forward at a conspicuously huge tree. Diane kept circling around him without separating and Sarah awaited further instructions while above.

「Now! Sarah!」

On Rion's order, Sarah dived forward towards the surrounding trees, a weaving streak of light like a cruise missile.

It hit the targeted tree but there was no explosion, the light motes only floated around it. A moment later Rion's sword struck the tree he aimed at.

「…The timing was perfect. We need to test this on some demonic beasts afterward guys.」

Just like this, he was figuring out a better way to utilize the spirits in battle but this was not merely using his multiple attributes anymore, he was simultaneously using both types of magic. Furthermore, while he was doing that, it was not a distraction for his bladework.

Like this, there would be hardly anyone within the school premises that could stand their ground against Rion in a duel. However, what Rion aimed to defeat was the protagonist protected by the world. No matter how much he trained, he could not be certain of victory.

Knowing that himself, Rion wouldn't be satisfied with just this. Utilizing the knowledge from his previous world, he wanted to attempt transcending current world's norms.

Had someone asked him what he wanted the most, this would be his answer. Rion thought that there was no way of defeating the world other than breaking past its norms.

Concentrating deeply he faced the spirits with his full power to forestall the resistance they tended to show at this moment.

「…Guys, please get along.」

Again, he outlined his thoughts to them with his words. Although visibly reluctant, the spirits gave consent. Having that, he conveyed a specific idea.

「Icy Lance」

The color hues began mixing and from that fusion, a lance made of ice was born.

「Go forth.」

His hand, that was raised in the air, swung downwards. The icy lance flew straight at the tree that Rion's hand was pointing at.

「…A hit …But.」

The magic projectile successfully made a hole in the tree. But despite that Rion was not satisfied. The damage didn't look any different to using the water lance that Diane could make on her own.

「But what?」

「Eh?!」

Even though he carefully checked the surroundings, there was a sound of a new voice that wasn't supposed to be there. Furthermore, it belonged to someone that he knew.

He timidly turned his head towards the source and sure enough, Ariel was standing there.

「…Good morning, milady.」

「Good morning to you as well, Rion」

「Isn't it too early for milady to be awake? Is there something you require urgently?」

「I knew you would be up early to train and I wanted to watch.」

「…I find it quite amazing that milady was able to find this place.」

「Somehow, I managed.」

「Somehow…?」

「I have a good sense of direction. Thanks to that I got to see sooo many interesting things.」

「…Is that so?」

Although he knew it would end like this the very beginning, Rion's attempt at diversion ended in failure

In his mind he was complaining to the spirits with all his might as he told them to warn him if someone was approaching. Sarah and Diane were having none of that, they expected that meeting Ariel would make Rion happy and they did not understand why was he complaining at all.

Due to that Rion understood why Ariel was able to find the place. Clearly, the spirits helped her find the way.

「What was that magic just now?」

Ariel asked the question that Rion didn't want to hear from her.

「It was my attempt at a new water attribute spell milady.」

「**What was that magic just now?**」

She repeated. However this time with knitted eyebrows, clearly angry that Rion was lying.

「…It was a fusion of two attributes.」

Being seen through, Rion felt he wouldn't be able to defy her anymore so he replied honestly.

「Fusion? What do you mean by that?」

「It's like mixing them together and using both at the same time?」

「…So you mixed two different attributes into one spell?」

「Yes, milady.」

「Rion, you really are…」

Ariel always accepted all the outrageous things that Rion showed he was capable of. For example, that was the case when she found out that he had two attributes when she had already deduced that it might've been the case from the beginning rather than doubt him.

However, in this situation even she was surprised by his preposterous attempt.

「…I beg your forgiveness milady.」

「What for? You did nothing wrong. I just can't imagine how did you manage to pull this off.」

「I… just asked?」

「……」

Because she thought that Rion was making a fool out of her Ariel's eyes narrowed and her gaze turned cold. Naturally, that was never Rion's intention.

「How to explain this… They were not getting along at first, so I tried to make it possible by having them reconcile.」

「……」

Although he tried following up with a more comprehensive explanation, that, unfortunately, didn't seem to work either.

「Erm…」

「…You …are actually serious?」

「Yes, milady.」

「…Reconcile? Them?」

「Sarah and Diane don't seem to really like each other that much, so I tried meditating between them and begged for cooperation.」

「Who are Sarah and Diane?」

「My… I guess it would be fine to call them spirits? Those beings that give form to the spells.」

「Spirits… Right, you said before that you thought that spirits were the origin of magic.」

「Well, I am still not sure if that is the proper way to call them. However, I am certain they have a sentience, distinct personalities and are able to understand requests.」

「…This is not something I am capable of.」

Ariel had confidence in her magical prowess. However, she couldn't feel the same sort of connection to spirits that Rion had and that made her be a little bit down.

「Is that so, milady? I am confident this is not unique to me and everyone should be capable of that. Milady too.」

「…Why do you think so?」

「I believe the reason why milady was able to find this place was because you were guided by your spirit. With a little help from Sarah and Diane.」

「My spirit?」

In regards to the source of magic she called mana, Ariel was not conscious of them to the point of calling them her possession. If being aware of them was the only qualification for using magic, that would make anyone in the world able to cast spells.

However, Rion gave them names and discussed the matters about his magic like he would do with his friends. And he was saying that it was that kind of entity that guided her towards this place.

「Will be able to interact with them as well, I wonder?」

「Milady can feel them already. So all that's left is giving them a name, though that will be hard as we won't be able to tell the gender yet, and accepting them as a partner.」

「Even if you say accept….」

「Why won't milady give them a name for a start? Things feel more familiar and closer once they are named.」

「Name… I wonder what would be nice?」

Seeing that Rion actually came up with names himself, Ariel naturally wanted to imitate him. Although she was still in doubt, she tried to think of a name just as she was told.

「Would Sylph suffice with it being a wind attribute spirit? Sylphine seems fine as well.」
「Rion, like this…」

「…Ah, like this it won't do, will it? Do excuse me. It will not be a personal bond if the name doesn't come from you. But if I might offer a tip, how about taking a part of a longer or complex name that you like? That is what I did.」

「…What did "Sarah" and "Diane" come from?」

「Sarah is a fire spirit, so I shortened the word Salamander, while Diane comes from the word Undine.」

「…I see. This makes sense, if it was just me, I'd come up with something weird.」

「I'm sure that's not true, milady. What is the name that comes to your mind?」

「Right… I thought about *『Rufii』? Is it odd?」

(*TN: Because Shi**rufi**ine / EN: I will drop this series if Ariel learned how to use Gomu Gomu no Fuusen or the Third Gear or if she got weird ideas such as becoming the Pirate King. /CEN : My Google-fu says this may be from Yu-Gi-Oh, don't hate Rion's last anime is Yu-Gi-Oh)

「Not at all. This is milady's spirit, the name you like will definitely be fine.」

「Alright, let's call it Rufii. What comes after naming it?」

「Please raise your hand like you would feed a bird and call it over audibly. It will eat some of your internal mana, do not get angry about that.」

「I understand.」

Ariel did as Rion told and raised her right hand, palm up, like feeding an invisible bird.

「……Rufii.」

She called out the name timidly.

The response arrived immediately. Numerous particles of light, like a swarm of fireflies, began to flicker around her hand. The number of light motes began to steadily increase and they started getting brighter.

Before long, not just her arms but her whole body became clad in the light.

「Ohh, as expected of Ariel-sama.」

Rion couldn't help but voice his admiration. The contrast with the time when he first called upon the spirits was obvious. The number of the spirits in Ariel's surroundings was way higher than in his and Rion thought that she was clearly loved by them very much. He also had one more impression.

「…Beautifull」

The sun began peeking from beyond the horizon painting the eastern sky. In the dim, wooded backyard, Ariel dazzling with the spirit-light illumination looked

like an angel or a goddess descending to earth.

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After school that day.

On Ariel's order, Rion guided her within the school premises. It wasn't really needed, though, Ariel only used that excuse to make him accompany her.

Probably due to the incident from this morning, Ariel was in a good mood. Her outward appearance might not differ from usual, but Rion could see it from her demeanor. Aside from him, the only other people that would likely notice such a thing would be Vincent and their parents.

Rion wanted the day to end on the same note, but the situation didn't develop as he wanted it to.

「Hmm, what are they doing over there?」

Letting Ariel notice the spectacle was Rion's mistake. He wanted to guide Ariel away before that happened.

「The mood over there doesn't seem to be very good, milady. I'm somewhat curious too, but it would be probably prudent not to get involved. 」

Although he attempted to divert her attention from the scene, it was futile.

「It seems the sour mood is the fruit of his majesty labors.」

「…That does look very likely indeed, milady.」

In front of Arnold, the central figure of the gathering in question, there was a group of, judging by exquisite hairstyles, noble ladies, trembling and looking overwhelmed. Behind him, one could spot a sheltering figure of Maria.

With this, Rion was able to get a good idea of what was happening.

「Come Rion, let's join them.」

「Milady, please, we should really not interrupt…」

「…..Why?」

「This looks like a very delicate situation and we are not certain what caused it…」

「That much is obvious, I wish to know the reasons.」

「But…」

「Stay if you wish, I'll go on my own.」

「If milady goes, so do I.」

There was no way to stop her. Rion knew that from the very beginning, but he still cursed his incompetence. Forcing his heavy-feeling feet to move forward, Rion followed after his mistress.

When they approached closer, they heard Arnold demanding an explanation from the ladies he was facing.

「I will ask once again. What are you all doing to Maria?」

「N-Nothing, your highness.」

「Why is she crying then!?」

「T-That woman selfishly…」

「You don't have any valid reason, do you!?」

「But…」

As Rion suspected, Maria was being harassed and Arnold who happened to see the situation interfered to help her. There's no mistake that it was one of the events that would make her get closer to the Crown Prince. Or one of those that would involve Ariel getting entangled to be worthlessly concluded with her getting angry.

「Good day, your highness, I'm happy to meet you here.」

Oblivious to Rion's uneasiness, Ariel entered the scene and greeted the Crown Prince in a perfectly inoffensive way.

「…Ariel」

Sure enough, Crown Prince Arnold was facing the female students with a scolding look and if things went badly that gaze would turn to Ariel.

「May I ask why is everyone in such a place?」

「This has nothing to do with you.」

「Nevertheless, it is sad to see a group of ladies being chastised by a lord in public.」

「What did you say?」

She did not clash with Maria but spoke as if trying to pick a fight with Arnold instead. It was an unparalleled impertinence for Rion to cut into their conversation, but even knowing that he felt he had to.

「Milady, wouldn't it be prudent to learn all the facts first.」

「That's perfectly unnecessary.」

「May I ask why?」

「The situation is clear. The ladies here did something to the commoner girl and that made his highness angry.」

「Aren't they at fault then? Isn't a scolding to be expected as a consequence?」

「That way of thinking is naive and simplistic.」

「Could I ask for explanation?」

「Disputes among high society ladies are commonplace. Having a man, and a royal at that, get involved in those is just not done. Elementary etiquette, Rion.」

「Is that the case?」

「Yes.」

What Ariel was saying was an unspoken rule among the ladies of the high echelons of society. Bringing in a man's authority into a conflict between women was considered tasteless. A person that did that, even if it brought them triumph, would be later on shunned in the social circle.

She was trying to apply that convention to the situation at hand. Although Rion didn't know if that was an appropriate thing to do, he was able to guess

why she tried.

「However, if a conflict like this escalated, wouldn't that call for outside mediation?」

「It absolutely would.」

「Who would be the best-suited person for that role?」

「The most senior lady of the aristocratic world of course. The Queen herself.」

「…I see.」

But there was no way the Queen would bother coming to the Academy just to settle a squabble between female students. So would it mean that a dispute between the female students in the Royal Academy could not be resolved?

「I doubt you failed to notice, but mother is not here, do you intend to replace her as the mediator?」

Arnold interrupted the explanations with his usual displeased expression.

「Your highness, why would I ever wish such hassle on myself?」

「Wasn't all this just now to use your position as my fiancée to do it?」

「Highness, I am neither a princess nor a Queen yet. Just a candidate for one by virtue of betrothal. I am under no illusion about being granted special privileges just with this.」

「What?」

The way Ariel phrased this brought up a possibility of breaking off their engagement.

「What your highness should do now, is to designate someone from the Academy to be your esteemed mother's surrogate in matters like this. It would help resolve this and any future disputes that are bound to happen.」

「I do not necessarily have to nominate you, do I?」

「Of course not. I have just enrolled here, this kind of burden would suit an upperclassman better.」

This could be easily understood as Ariel's refusal to mediate as the Queen's

surrogate, and Arnold did actually take it this way.

「…Well then, I'll nominate anyone other than you.」

「That is perfectly fine, your highness.」

Arnold's attempt at sarcasm was shrugged off by Ariel. Having run out of rebuttals, the prince left the scene looking vexed. Maria, following right after was clearly delighted. Although at first she was perplexed about Ariel's attitude, she became happy with the gap between Ariel and the prince obviously expanding due to this direct confrontation.

Although Rion understood Maria's feelings, he couldn't suppress his annoyance.

「I kept you waiting Rion. Now that this is over, where will you take me next?」

「…Milady.」

「I want to fully enjoy my Academy life. I do not welcome any extra tasks that would be a distraction from that.」

「…Yes, milady」

Rion was able to deduce from those words that Ariel wanted a change of mood. Although his irritation at Maria didn't lessen, he agreed with Ariel's sentiment.

「All of you as well, won't you stop wasting my precious time on such trivial things?」

The female students that felt relieved after the Crown Prince's departure instantly turned pale at Ariel's words. They immediately knew that she was genuinely angry. They were also aware that a genuinely angry Ariel would be incomparably scarier than Arnold could ever be.

「Milady, should we go to the cafeteria next? There are some inexpensive but delicious desserts I wish to recommend. Because milady doesn't usually get to taste such things, why not use this as an opportunity?」

Once Rion stopped indulging himself with idle thinking and noticed the shivering female students, he made a light-hearted suggestion.

「Let’s do that. If that’s what Rion suggests then that’s fine.」

Ariel’s severe expression changed into a sweet smile as she faced Rion.

「Well then, lead on.」

「At once, milady」

To Ariel, everything other than spending her time with Rion was pointless. She wanted to make as many sweet memories with him as she could within the time she had left. That was Ariel’s only wish for her school life.

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HnM Corner:

Did our pace just became a little bit faster? I don’t know lol. Anyway, this chapter would probably be followed up by another one in a few days.

Thank you for the support.

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**Note: For comments, suggestions, copyright inquiries etc, please do get in touch with us through the contact form found in the menu.**